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CORRESPONDENCE

Canada's better way

Commerce, Tex.

To the Editors: As one target of the Iowa doctor's criticism of Canada's national health-care system [Correspondence, April 8]—and because Americans in general are poorly informed about that system—I feel obliged to enter some corrections.

Last year *Maclean's Magazine* highlighted its finding that Canada's program played an important role in building national unity, a view that contrasts with your correspondent's impression that national homogeneity is a prior need for a successful program. The question is particularly important in Canada, of course, in view of the growing strength of the separatist movement in Quebec. Canada's experience obviously suggests that a comparable system could help heal fissures in our own social structure.

Your correspondent's intimation that doctors and hospitals in Canada are inferior to their American counterparts is contrary to the judgment of those who know best: Not only are Canadians in general highly pleased with their health care, but more than 80 percent of Canadian doctors give it high grades. Indeed, many M.D.'s who fled to the United States a quarter of a century ago in protest have subsequently returned home to a more relaxed and paper-free existence. Moreover, applications to Canadian medical schools have been on the rise in recent years.

EDWARD M. CORBETT

An explosive sequel

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: In response to "An Adams Chronicle," by Edward Gaffney, Jr. [April 8], may I point out that no sooner had Gerry Adams departed from the United States—having got the publicity he desired—than fire bombs rained down on Oxford Street and missiles were fired at planes landing at Heathrow and Gatwick.

Where is the outcry against that appalling attempt to massacre not only Britons but nationals of many other countries?

It is a tragedy that so many people of good will on all sides cannot prevail against a few senseless and intransigent men.

JOAN AMBROSE COOPER

Research wasn't cut off

Indianapolis, Ind.

To the Editors: In his otherwise thoughtful and nuanced review of Richard Schoenherr and Lawrence Young's *Full Pews and Empty Altars: Demographics of the Priest Shortage in United States Catholic Dioceses* [March 11], Patrick H. McNamara makes the curious statement, "[A] few bishops did succeed in having the authors' funds cut off, thereby delaying publication for several years." I find that statement "curious" since it was the Lilly Endowment which provided the support for Schoenherr and Young's work and I am the Lilly staff member most involved in those grants. I am unaware of any attempt—let alone a successful one—to "cut off" the authors' funds. Quite the contrary. Beginning in 1984, the Lilly Endowment awarded more than $400,000 to the United States Catholic Conference to support this research. Indeed, less than a year ago, as the book was nearing publication, the Endowment awarded a supplemental grant to Professor Schoenherr's University of Wisconsin, which enabled that Press to send a complimentary copy of the book to every U.S. bishop. Perhaps Professor McNamara knows something that I don't about the details of the funding of this important research.

FRED L. HOFHEINZ

The writer is program director for religion at the Lilly Endowment.

The author replies:

Fred Hofheinz is right. I erred in stating that the authors' funds were cut off. I had in mind Robert McClory's review of *Full Pews and Empty Altars* in the *National Catholic Reporter* [November 5, 1993], in which he remarked that several bish-

(Continued on page 29)

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COMMONWEAL

CONTENTS

Volume CXXI, Number 9

Correspondence:	2
Editorial:	3
The torch is passed: *George Grayson*	4
In Chiapas, long shadows: *Alberto Huerta*	5
The price of democracy: *Karl Bermann*	6
Women's colleges work: *Abigail McCarthy*	8
Paying for abortions: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*	9
Shattering philosophy's mirror: *Gordon D. Marino*	11
Poetry: *Richard E. McMullen*	13
Catherine McLaughlin	16
In the Paraclete I trust: *Marian Burkhart*	15
Screen: *Richard Alleva*	17
Media: *Frank McConnell*	18

BOOKS

Facing Up, by Peter G. Peterson: *Jay R. Mandle*	20
The Catholic Church in Haiti, by Anne Greene: *John P. Hogan*	22
War and Responsibility, by John Hart Ely: *James Finn*	24
In Europe's Name, by Timothy Garton Ash: *Timothy A. Byrnes*	26
On Human Rights, Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley, editors: *David Hollenbach*	27
What's New Orleans?: *Peggy Ellsberg*	31

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Common decency

As we write, the bloody Bosnian Serb siege of Gorazde has been lifted. UN troops have entered the city full of Muslim refugees, ostensibly to interpose themselves between the largely defenseless civilian population and Serbs bent on finishing the job of ethnic cleansing. Some of the wounded have been evacuated. Medical care is being rushed to the city, where the Serbs targeted the hospital. Finally, Serb forces are said to be withdrawing beyond the twenty-kilometer security zone imposed April 24 under the threat of NATO bombing.

How long this cessation of Serb aggression and genocidal attacks will last is anyone's guess. If recent history is any guide, they will be back waging war against civilians somewhere in Bosnia before you read this. At this dismal juncture, those who warned that UN and NATO efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement in Bosnia were doomed to fail unless the international community gave up the pretense of neutrality and actively opposed the Serbs in some way have been proven right. Under the threat of so-called "serious" NATO bombing, the Serbs have retreated from Sarajevo and now Gorazde, but not before wreaking massive destruction and terror. Surely it is clear that the Serbs hold all the tactical advantages, being able to pick the time and the place to test the UN's resolve or call NATO's bluff. As Western leaders temporize, the Serbs prosecute what since 1945 has been thought unthinkable—a war of terror against civilians in the midst of Europe. And it is far from over.

As we have said in the past, the continued arms embargo against the Bosnian government is unconscionable. Whatever legitimate concerns there may be about the moral dangers and strategic difficulties of involving Western forces directly in this conflict, surely the Bosnians have a right to defend themselves. If the UN cannot rise to the occasion, we should act unilaterally. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) has argued, the UN charter and international law demand at least that much. More important, only a Bosnian state capable of defending itself will deter the Serbs and bring a chance for a lasting peace.

Few doubt that the Serbs have manipulated the "peace process" to maximum advantage. They have not hesitated to break countless cease-fire accords and to place Serbian women and children as roadblocks to UN relief convoys. Having conquered two-thirds of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they are now trying to consolidate those gains by eliminating the few pockets left of Bosnian resistance—the gruesomely mislabeled "safe havens." The Serb strategy is transparent. With the international community clamoring for a cease-fire under almost any conditions, the Serbs want to seize as much territory as possible and then demand peace on their terms at the negotiating table. If the Bosnian government balks at acceding to Serb military conquests, the Serbs will paint their victims as warmongers and as part of an Islamic threat. In the name of peace many in the West will be tempted to

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embrace the Serb *fait accompli*.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher lamely argues that the Gorazde pull-back is evidence of progress toward a diplomatic settlement. Has Christopher or the Clinton administration any credibility left? It is not clear whether President Bill Clinton is unwilling or simply unable to galvanize international resistance to Serb crimes. What is clear is that the international community's willingness to resist aggression elsewhere is being measured in Bosnia. Failure to deter the Serbs may yet bring calamitous repercussions for the region as a whole. Indeed, with the Serbs defying the UN when and where they see fit, what stock can the Bosnian government put in future Serb promises or future UN resolve? Worse, the international community's fecklessness may encourage imprudent action by Russian hardliners or rogue states such as North Korea. Aggression undeterred in Bosnia is creating an uncertainty that breeds conflict. Distracted by Whitewater and understandably concerned about domestic issues, President Clinton is in danger of squandering U.S. influence and power for good in a world in which we must lead whether we like it or not.

Clinton has yet to speak candidly to the American people about what is at stake morally and politically in Bosnia. If he is at a loss for words, he might borrow some from George Orwell. "If you had asked me why I joined the militia I should have answered: 'To fight against fascism,'" Orwell wrote in *Homage to Catalonia* in 1938. "...And if you had asked me what I was fighting for, I should have answered: 'Common decency.'"

ET CETERA

COOL & CANDID IN REYKJAVIK Jesuit Bishop Alfred J. Jolson of the ancient diocese of Reykjavik, Iceland (founded in 1056, restored in 1988), died at age sixty-five during a visit to Pittsburgh in late March. At the time of his appointment he was one of three priests in the world with an Icelandic heritage; a grandfather, Gudman Hjalpason, was born there. Bishop Jolson held a doctorate in economics from the Gregorian University in Rome, an MBA from Harvard; he taught at several U.S. colleges and served for twenty years as a missionary in Iraq and Zimbabwe. Bishop Jolson was known to *Commonweal* readers as author of "A Bishop's Concerns: Who Will Minister in A.D. 2000?" [July 17, 1992], an article that raised questions about the future of the priesthood that few others in the hierarchy acknowledge: whether women can be ordained, whether priests should be allowed to marry, whether priests who have resigned and married might return to the active ministry, whether "temporary vocations" should be considered. Without endorsing any of the options he described, he wrote that the crisis of ministry requires action: "Though a collapse eventually leads to decisions being taken, it would be better not to be faced with making them in necessity or in a state of collapse." To cope with the problem, "[w]e need prayer, courage, imagination, and fortitude." Amen. R.I.P.

REPORTS ON MEXICO

THE TORCH IS PASSED

SALINAS TO ZEDILLO

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has transformed not only Mexico's foreign economic policy but also its domestic political priorities. This fact was evident in his selection March 30 of Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León to replace the slain Luis Donaldo Colosio as the presidential nominee of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Before Salinas unveiled his choice, old-line *Priistas*, the so-called "dinosaurs" who inhabit the party's labor and peasant sectors, voiced dismay over Zedillo, a forty-two-year-old Yale-trained economist who had been serving as Colosio's campaign manager. Rather than a cosmopolitan egghead, PRI's swag-bellied bosses wanted as their standard-bearer a biceps-squeezing, savvy operative, in tune with grassroots politics. After two Ivy-League-educated chief executives, they longed for someone who appreciated patronage and payola more than econometric models and floating exchange rates. Their favorite was party chairman Fernando Ortiz Arana, forty-nine, lauded by one jowly congressman for his "patronism, clarity, talent, and faith in the principles of the Mexican revolution." But Ortiz Arana bowed out of the contest and urged his comrades to back the president's recommendation.

As a result, Salinas has had his way. For him, it was more important to convince financial gurus in New York, London, and Tokyo that Mexico would not veer from liberal trade policy and market-focused reforms than to butter up ward-heelers in Mexico City, Chihuahua, and Oaxaca.

Zedillo was just the man to calm squeamish investors. Not only were his academic credentials impeccable, but he won praise as research director of Mexico's central bank and as head of the FICORCA program that managed private-industry debt during the '80s. He performed brilliantly as Salinas's budget chief from 1988 to 1992. In this sensitive position, Zedillo deftly salved the bruised egos of losers in the budget process, while sharply boosting outlays for the antipoverty Solidarity initiative and other social ventures. His record was more ambiguous as education secretary (1992-93). He raised hackles by producing an expensive new grade-school history text that implicated the Mexican army in a 1968 bloodbath in Mexico City. He also decentralized the nation's underfunded, extremely politicized educational system. This move forced the aggressive, 800,000-member teachers' union to hammer out separate accords with thirty-one different state governments in lieu of a nationwide contract. Developing the political skills that the stiff, professional Zedillo exhibited in dealing with agency heads and teachers will be crucial to his success.

While not happy campers, the party bosses will climb aboard

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Zedillo's bandwagon. They realize that party faithfulness is a prerequisite for legislative nominations, city council seats, bureaucratic posts, and favorable labor-management decisions. Besides, PRI veterans loathe Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, nominee of the left-nationalist Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and Zedillo's strongest opponent. They regard Cárdenas, former governor of Michoacán state and son of a beloved, late president, as a Judas. After all, he bolted the PRI in 1987 and challenged Salinas for the presidency a year later. Now he is trying to make political hay out of the Indian-focused rebellion that erupted in the southern state of Chiapas on New Year's Day.

Zedillo should win the August 21 presidential election thanks to the popularity of Salinas and Solidarity, an outpouring of sympathy for the martyred Colosio, the PRI's well-financed electoral machine, and a conservative electorate. The Mexican public, for whom he is an unknown quantity, may also like the fact that the unpretentious Zedillo grew up in a lower middle-class family in Mexicali where, as a child, he sold old cans to

In Chiapas, long shadows

Consternation, confusion, and frustration characterize the prevailing mood in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, where the insurrection of the indigenous Emiliano Zapata Liberación Nacional movement (EZLN) blew open 1994. Now, four months later, sinister and mysterious forces seem to be stalking not only Chiapas but all Mexico.

The March 23 assassination of the popular presidential candidate of the PRI party, Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta, opened wide Mexico's unhealed wounds. The "lone gunman," caught by an amateur video photographer, alluded to a conspiracy and transformed the Colosio assassination into a Mexican version of the Kennedy tragedies. Every detail was replayed on Mexican television—which I watched during a recent visit to Chiapas—including the transfer of Colosio's body from Tijuana to Mexico City and finally back to the Sonoran desert town of Magdalena del Kino for burial. Mexicans said that for them, Holy Week had come one week early this year. Most were convinced that twenty-three-year-old Mario Aburto Martinez had not acted alone.

Deep in the Lacandon Rain Forest of Chiapas, Subcommander Marcos of the EZLN, informed five hours after the PRI candidate had been gunned down, denied any involvement in the assassination. He had "no beef" with Colosio, he said, and theorized that the candidate's assassination "was an internal affair to settle accounts. The system killed the candidate." Bishop Samuel Ruiz García of San Cristóbal, who has been mediating the peace process in Chiapas, was in Guadalajara at the time of the assassination. He immediately rushed back to San Cristóbal to offer a Mass for the deceased candidate. In his sermon, Ruiz denounced the assassination and saw it as a threat to the peace process in Chiapas. The ministry of defense, concerned that another assassination plot might be brewing and aware of threats on Ruiz's life, sent three tanks to San Cristóbal's *Parque Central*. Ruiz is now provided with a military guard that makes him almost inaccessible.

On March 25, Ruiz met with 150 priests, religious, and pastoral ministers to discuss his role in the ongoing peace process. Those present voted unanimously that the bishop should continue as mediator for the EZLN. Ruiz then prayed for the fallen candidate and urged all parties to keep open the channels of peace: Do not panic or give in to false alarms, he said.

San Cristóbal remains in a state of siege. There is a strong military presence in and around the city. To get there, a visitor must go through numerous checkpoints. Foreigners are advised that it is not a convenient time to be in Chiapas.

Ruiz has his hands full. Two thousand *cafetaleros* (coffee growers), *finqueros* (landowners), and *ganaderos* (cattlemen) have banded together and formed the Civic Front of San Cristóbal. Several weeks before the assassination, they had forcibly shut down seven Catholic churches in San Cristóbal. They posted signs calling for the ouster of Bishop Ruiz and his council of priests, and demanded that the local independent paper, *El Tiempo*, be shut down. Since March 13, unidentified armed men have arrived at the paper's offices each morning around 3 A.M., with the intention of intimidating vendors who are coming to pick up and distribute the paper. Meanwhile, Bishop Ruiz is trying to feed and clothe 20,000 displaced *indios*. Seventy percent of those displaced by the January uprising are children under the age of thirteen, 20 percent are older women, and the remaining 10 percent are older men and street youths. Added to this burden are 40,000 Guatemalan refugees, housed in various camps in the diocese. No wonder the bishop invited his fellow priests this Lent to enter into a *kenosis*—the suffering, passion, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the eve of Holy Week, Subcommander Marcos issued a statement that was ominous in tone. He charged that the military would soon begin an offensive against the EZLN, and he declared a red alert. No one, he said, could be assured of safety, including reporters. I decided then I would restrict my conversations with indigenous residents, lest I jeopardize them further.

On Palm Sunday, as I walked the deserted streets of San Cristóbal before returning to California, I heard the safety catch of a gun and the click of a round being inserted. I looked around but saw no one. The shadows in Chiapas seemed to have grown unusually long. ALBERTO HUERTA

Alberto Huerta, S.J., who has written previous reports for Commonweal *from Chiapas, Mexico (December 17, 1993, January 28, 1994), is an associate professor at the University of San Francisco.*

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scrap dealers. He made it to the top through brains and hard work, not a political pedigree and door-opening contacts.

Still, winning an election may prove easier than governing. Mexico's next leader will face problems more daunting than those confronting Salinas when he took the presidential oath in December 1988.

Salinas deserves enormous credit for his unswerving commitment to economic change. He slashed the inflation rate from 159.2 percent (1987) to 8 percent last year, privatized hundreds of state-owned "white elephant" firms, and moved the federal government from a 20-percent deficit to a surplus. To his credit, he defied strident nationalists, who regard Uncle Sam as an imperialist satan, to forge a free-trade agreement with the United States and Canada that links Mexico's once-cocooned economy to global markets.

In many ways, however, Salinas was coloring by the numbers in economic matters—that is, he sedulously adhered to an orthodox blueprint for reforming a hugely statist and inefficient economy. No similar prescription exists for the twin challenges that face his successor: Implementing widespread NAFTA-impelled changes in the economy and legal system, while opening up Mexico's authoritarian political system.

It can be argued that economic modernization paves the way for political liberalization. First, economic progress expands the size of the middle class, which—in turn—serves as a powerful advocate for civil liberties and democratic choice. Second, experience in making economic decisions generates demands for greater choice in the political marketplace. Third, free-trade-inspired contacts with democratic trading partners in North America and Europe would diminish authoritarianism in Mexico, just as Spain and Portugal's entry into the European Community fostered democracy in those erstwhile dictatorships. Fourth, market-oriented policies stimulate decentralization, which curbs the government's ability to manipulate economic resources as a tool of political control. Fifth, such policies also undermine the clout of heavy-handed labor chieftains, long accustomed to sweetheart contracts with the public and private sectors. Finally, liberalization diminishes opportunities for under-the-table pay-offs or *mordidas*, as market mechanisms replace discretion exercised by sticky-fingered bureaucrats.

The challenge for Zedillo will be to marginalize gradually the old guard, while broadening access to the political process for elements of the business community, professionals, women, young people, shantytown dwellers, and small farmers to whom the current regime represents repression, rigged elections, and corruption. At the same time, he must convince dirt-poor Chiapan peasants and other "have-nots" that their country's foreign-educated mandarins care about their plight, as Salinas attempted to do through Solidarity. Only by enhancing the legitimacy of the PRI-dominated system can Mexico, now in the throes of rapid change, minimize the inevitable domestic turmoil that frightens off investors and impedes the sustained growth required to vault the nation from the third to the first world. GEORGE GRAYSON

George Grayson is the Class of 1938 Professor of Government at the College of William & Mary. He has just completed a book on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

REPORT FROM PANAMA

THE PRICE OF DEMOCRACY

WITH AN EYE TO THE NORTH

Miriam is twenty-nine and a single mother. She works six nights a week at the reception desk of a modest hotel. An aunt takes care of her four-year-old daughter while she is at work. Miriam's earnings of 94 cents an hour put her monthly income a little above the legal minimum of $150, and in this sense she is lucky because 30 percent of Panama's work force have no jobs at all. Nevertheless, she'd like to find another job, even if it paid less, one that would leave her weekends free and where she wouldn't have to sit so many hours on the high, broken stool that hurts her back. But because of Panama's deep economic crisis she sees no hope of finding other work in the near future, and for that reason she seriously considers not voting in Panama's May 8 presidential election.

All seven presidential candidates have promised to create jobs, but Miriam doesn't believe them, except perhaps Rubén Blades, the internationally known salsa singer and movie star. The polls show Blades contesting second place with two other candidates, each with the support of about 14 percent of the electorate. Miriam doesn't think Blades can win, but if she does go to the polls on election day it will be to cast a protest vote for him.

In Panama's last election, in 1989, she voted for Guillermo Endara, the current president, because she wanted to rid the country of Manuel Noriega and his military dictatorship. Noriega canceled the election before all the votes were counted, but the U.S. declared Endara the winner anyway and installed him in office after invading the country in Operation Just Cause. Now Miriam says she regrets voting for Endara, because economic and social conditions have only gotten worse under his administration. Besides the lack of jobs, she worries about crime and drugs, which everyone here seems to agree are out of control. Apart from the question of money laundering and drug-related corruption, "leakage" of drugs from the north-bound drug pipeline has now become a serious problem, which was not the case under Noriega. A hit of crack can reportedly be had on the street for as little as 25 cents.

It is perhaps a double irony, then, that the man who is currently leading the polls with 35 percent—more than twice the support of his nearest rival—is Ernesto Pérez Balladares, the candidate of the Revolutionary Democratic Party, or PRD. The PRD was the party of Manuel Noriega, who is now serving time in a U.S. federal penitentiary on drug trafficking charges—the result of the bloodiest and most expensive drug bust in history. But the PRD was also the party of one-time populist strongman General Omar Torrijos, who was killed in a mysterious plane crash in 1981. Torrijos is a mythic figure in Panama, and

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Pérez Balladares, whose slogan is "the people to power," has done everything he can to wrap himself in the Torrijos mantle.

That Pérez Balladares is a skillful politician is not in doubt. A big man—his nickname, "Toro," means "bull" in Spanish—he looks like a Panamanian Bill Clinton without the Clinton coiffure. He is also an economist, trained at Notre Dame and the Wharton School. But while Toro himself seems fairly clean—he held government posts until 1984 when he had a falling out with Noriega and spent a few months in exile in Spain—many Panamanians fear the PRD is riddled with Noriega holdovers.

Miriam numbers herself among the skeptics. She thinks Noriega killed Torrijos, perhaps with the help of the CIA, which kept Noriega on its payroll for many years before his falling out with the Reagan administration. On the other hand she considers Torrijos the best leader Panama ever had. Where she comes from, in Chiriquí Province, her father used to work on a banana plantation of the Chiriquí Land Company, a subsidiary of United Fruit. She remembers that when the banana workers went on strike Torrijos intervened on their behalf. She also remembers that he built schools and improved health care. She herself received a government grant that enabled her to attend high school. Unlike many of the people she knows, however, she doesn't think Toro and the PRD will bring back the good old days.

Despite Pérez Balladares's populist slogans, his TV commercials are slick and fuzzy. All the candidates, in fact, sound as if they're being coached by Madison Avenue. All are long on concern about Panama's problems, but short on specific proposals as to how to solve them. All attack Endara for earnestly paying off foreign lenders while ignoring poverty, unemployment, crime, and the country's crumbling health and educational systems. That inclues the two candidates from Endara's own fractured coalition—Mireya Moscoso de Gruber of Endara's Arnulfista party and Rubén Darío Carles of an amalgam party called "Change '94." All the candidates say that while the foreign debt must be paid they would try to get better terms from foreign lenders. All, with more or less enthusiasm, say they'd ask to renegotiate the Carter-Torrijos Treaty so the U.S. could keep its bases here, which it is now scheduled to vacate by the year 2000. (The Pentagon, which spends about $300 million a year in Panama in connection with the bases, says it doesn't want to keep them.)

Officials of the U.S. Embassy say they aren't worried about the possibility of a PRD victory, even though it might be interpreted as a repudiation of Operation Just Cause. After all, that was George Bush's thing. The important thing, they say, straight-faced, is to institutionalize the democratic process. Because, regardless of which candidate the Panamanian people choose, when election day is passed the embassy will still be pushing free trade, which seems to have replaced the drug war as Washington's obsession in Latin America. That includes a reduction in Panama's tariff barriers and a relaxation in the labor code inherited from the Torrijos years.

Like Miriam, Freddy is skeptical about the election. A stocky man in his late forties, he plays the bass in a jazz ensemble when he isn't driving his taxi. He also belongs to an evangelical Christian church—an unusual combination. None of the politicians, Freddy says, represents the people. They're only out to enrich themselves and the upper classes. Freddy, too, voted for Endara in 1989, because he thought it the best way to end the economic crisis brought on by the U.S. trade embargo against Noriega. Now he feels "defrauded" by Endara, who he says made many promises but kept none.

Freddy is still paying for Operation Just Cause, which in theory made the current elections possible. He tells about it as he poses for a picture beside his "new" taxi—a 1988 Toyota Corolla. Freddy, his wife, and their two teen-age sons were inside their seventh-story apartment at 11:30 P.M. on December 19, 1989, when the U.S. attack began. His old taxi was parked nearby outside the PDF headquarters, a principal target of the assault. Unable to escape, he and his family spent the night in terror, certain they were going to die. Bombs, rockets, and shells exploded all around them. One shell blew away a section of wall in the apartment directly under theirs. Miraculously, they all escaped physical injury. But at 7:30 the next morning, when heavily armed U.S. troops, through loudspeakers, ordered Freddy, his family, and the other surviving residents of his building to come out with their hands up, he found his cab destroyed.

Auto insurance in Panama doesn't cover U.S. invasions, and Freddy was left without a livelihood or resources. He had to get another cab, and soon, or face losing his taxi license. Ultimately, he got a loan to buy the Toyota second-hand from a car rental company. It cost $7,100; along with principal and interest payments, he had to pay $600 a year for the insurance the finance company required. He and his family, he says, went practically without food and clothes to make the $100 payment every fifteen days. He finally paid off that loan last December, four years after Just Cause, but only because he took out a second loan for $2,000 that he'll be paying off, at $60 a month, for the next five years. Still, Freddy says, he doesn't hate the United States, even as he shows me the letter from Captain Kevin K. LaChance of the U.S. Army's Southern Command denying his claim for damages. "There is no legal authority to compensate you for your loss," the letter says in both English and Spanish.

Even though Freddy has little faith in the candidates, he says he probably will vote on May 8. There is no requirement to vote in Panama, but Freddy takes his voter identification card from his wallet to show me where it was punched for previous elections. When you have to transact business with the government, he says, they always want to see your voter card. He fears things might go badly for him if it isn't punched for this election, too.

Who will Freddy vote for? Probably Rubén Darío Carles, the candidate he considers to be closest to the U.S. He thinks Carles is personally honest, but more important, he thinks Panama has to have a president who can get along with the United States. He knows from experience how expensive things can get when it doesn't.

KARL BERMANN

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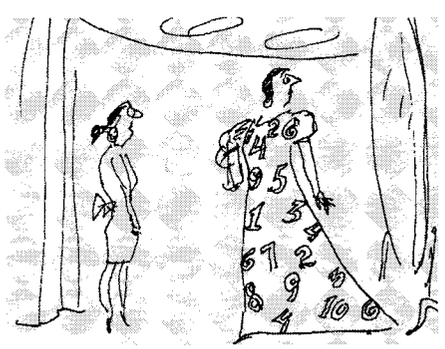
WOMEN'S COLLEGES WORK

YOU COULD LOOK IT UP

It is graduation time at the nation's colleges and universities. But as the strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" reverberate over the campuses, they do not evoke emotions quite as happy as in previous years. Members of the class of '94 are all too aware that, whether they go on into graduate or professional schools or immediately into the employment market, their chances in that market are very uncertain. And administrators, as they bid farewell to the seniors, are keeping an anxious eye on applications for the freshmen classes that will replace them.

In most institutions those applicants have declined in number; the incoming class will be smaller than the outgoing was at the time of matriculation. There has been a sharp dip in the population of the college aged. That fact and the discouraging rise in college costs have sent even once highly selective colleges scrounging for enrollees.

Surprisingly the trend has been reversed at women's colleges. Their enrollment is rising; for the past few years the number of applications to women's colleges has increased 14 percent. Individual colleges, including my own, report even more startling figures: 38 percent more applications than last year from those aspiring to be first-time freshmen, for instance. What has happened?



"Of course, if you have a fear of mathematics, that's a different story."

A quarter of a century ago women's colleges went into a period of precipitate decline. Tuition-hungry hitherto all-male institutions began to open their doors to women. The rising tide of the new feminism encouraged women to enter institutions where they could supposedly compete equally with men and benefit from the—also supposedly—better preparation of men for success. (There were 214 women's colleges in the country in 1960. There are fewer than a hundred today.)

Even as the decline began, results of research became available indicating that graduation from a women's college was a better predictor of success for women than any other variable. As early as 1973, M. Elizabeth Tidball pointed out that women's colleges, based on a survey of *Who's Who in American Women*, had "an unparalleled record in graduating women who became 'women achievers.'" Subsequent research—also in the 1970s—documented that a larger number of women's college graduates received research doctorates in the arts, humanities, social sciences, or the natural sciences and were admitted to medical schools.

Sixteen, years later, in 1989, Tidball wrote again on the subject:

> The women's college story is one of nurture, caring, discipline, high expectations, and appropriate rewards, all brought together in an environment that embraces the wholeness inherent in the academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular facets of the collegiate experience.
>
> Two basic questions may be asked about women's colleges in acknowledging their unequaled record of producing high achievers: What do they do, and how do they do it?
>
> What they do is quite simple, but unique: women's colleges have, as their first priority, the education of women. They are the only institution in all of higher education that do. (*Educating the Majority,* American Council on Education, 1989).

It is undoubtedly in recognition of these factors that a gradual return to the women's colleges is taking place. Jadwiga S. Sebrechts, executive director of the Women's College Coalition, says that, diminished in number as they are, now attended by only 3 percent of the women in college, "this small minority has a disproportionately large effect on society." She cites interesting statistics:

Women's college graduates are more than *twice* as likely to receive doctoral degrees in any field. *Twenty-four percent* of the women in Congress attended women's colleges. *One-third* of the women board members of *Fortune* 1000 companies did also. *Thirty percent* of the *Business Week* list of the women who are rising stars in corporate America are women's college graduates. So are *20 percent* of the *Black Enterprise* list of the most powerful black women in corporate America (*see* Sebrechts, *Importance of Women's Colleges,* SCAN, Saint Paul, *Saint Catherine's Alumnae News*, Spring, 1994).

Add to this statistical evidence the anecdotal evidence of the large numbers of influential women in journalism and executive politics like Hillary Rodham Clinton, Cokie Roberts of ABC News and National Public Radio, and Linda Wertheimer, also of NPR—all women's-college graduates. Overall the data in favor of women's colleges are overwhelming, but still not widely known.

What happens in a women's college is that women find themselves valued for themselves and learn that their education and preparation for mature life are very important. Their full potential is not lost to society as it may be in institutions to which they have simply been added to a male population where they have few role models. (At a Jesuit institution where I spoke recently, for example, although some 56 percent of the student body was female, only about 30 percent of the faculty were; and these were concentrated in the departments preparing students for traditional roles like teaching.)

Women's colleges have developed, consciously or unconsciously on the part of their administrators and faculties, ways

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of educating that recognize differences in the ways women learn. Recent research has shown that girls and women prefer cooperative learning; boys are more competitive and individualistic. Interestingly enough in coeducational institutions where it is held important that the full potential of both sexes not be lost to society, faculty are now experimenting with single-sex classes and/or increasing the number of women in certain classes so that they have peer support as they would have in institutions for women.

At Saint Stephen's and Saint Agnes's, an Episcopal school in Alexandria, Virginia, the faculty have divided all sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade math and science classes by sex. The result: the girls do as well as the boys! At the University of Maryland where women were dropping out of the engineering department at greater rates than men, although their SAT scores were higher, professor Deborah Goodings experimented by doubling the number of women in one class section. The result: a higher number of women from that section stayed in engineering. Douglas College—the women's college at Rutgers—and Penn State have established dormitories for women in math and science where they have both peer support and graduate mentors.

These efforts respond to the need expressed by Myra and David Sadker, authors of *Failing at Fairness, How America's Schools Cheat Girls* (Scribners), "If the cure for cancer is forming in the mind of one of our daughters, it is less likely to become a reality than if it is forming in the mind of one of our sons."

Nevertheless, these coeducational school experiments in trying to replicate the way in which women's institutions nurture women's talent, are meeting opposition from doctrinaire feminists. Creating special groups will damage women's self-esteem, the critics say, and they will be unprepared to cope when they go into the real world. It seems obvious that these predictions fly in the face of the documented achievements already made by the graduates of women's colleges in male-dominated arenas. The experimenting faculties and administrations are learning what male faculty at women's institutions have already learned: how women of achievement are nurtured. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

PAYING FOR ABORTIONS

PROCHOICERS JUNK PRINCIPLES

The mask is off. The "prochoice" movement (with the blessing and backing of the Clinton administration) is fighting to have national health care include coverage for abortion. In other words, the abortion folks want to compel anti-abortion folks to participate in what the latter consider to be unwarranted homicide. Now all but the willfully blind can see what the abortion movement is: not prochoice but pro-abortion.

Up till now the rhetoric of the abortion-rights people has utilized two main arguments: the personal freedom argument and the pluralism argument.

According to the personal freedom argument, the autonomy of the individual is a fundamental value. Neither society nor government has the least right to interfere with a woman when, in the sacred forum of her conscience, she is making the decision to abort or not to abort.

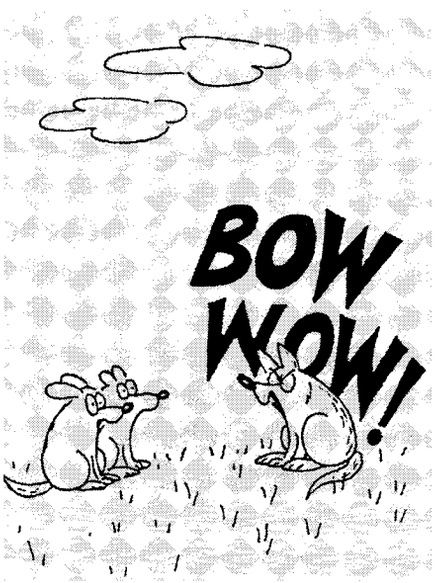
According to the pluralism argument, the cultural diversity of the United States means that no culture-group has the right to impose its values on any other culture-group. If Catholics or Southern Baptists, for instance, are opposed to abortion, fine; let them abstain. But they have no business prohibiting abortion to those whose cultural values tell them abortion is morally permissible.

These arguments have a nice American ring to them. After all, breathes there an American with soul so dead who never to himself hath said, "This is my own, my native land—the land of the free and the home of the diverse"? When the abortion movement came on the national stage dressed in the garments of autonomy and pluralism, it was hard to resist. It was like being wrapped in the American flag.

But now the abortion movement seems to have forgotten all its fine words about freedom and pluralism as it urges Congress to compel all Americans to pay for the feticidal preferences of a few culture groups.

Is personal freedom an ultimate value? Well then, suppose your conscience tells you that it is wrong to contribute to an insurance plan that pays for abortion. Suppose it tells you that such contributions make you a partner in homicide. What then? If society protects a woman's freedom to kill the unborn life growing in her, shouldn't it protect your freedom not to be a killer? Is there any personal freedom more basic than the freedom not to dirty your hands unless you choose to?

If the abortion movement truly believed in freedom and choice, it would move heaven and earth to see to it that our choice not to pay for abortion would be respected. But of course it does not believe in freedom; it believes in abortion. Today it looks us right in the eye and says, "Remember when we told you that all we wanted was to be left alone;



"Watch out for this guy... his bite is even worse than his bark!"

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that we wouldn't tell you what to do and you shouldn't tell us what to do either? Well, we were just kidding. The real plan is this: you not only have to permit our abortions, you have to pay for them too. Live with it."

And pluralism? Is respect for cultural differences still a good thing? If so, those who have defended abortion rights in the name of cultural pluralism should be the first to defend the right of those culture groups opposed to abortion not to have to pay for it. The abortion pluralists have told us that Catholics and Southern Baptists have no right to impose their values on others. Well then, neither do pro-abortion culture groups have a right to impose their values on Catholics and Southern Baptists.

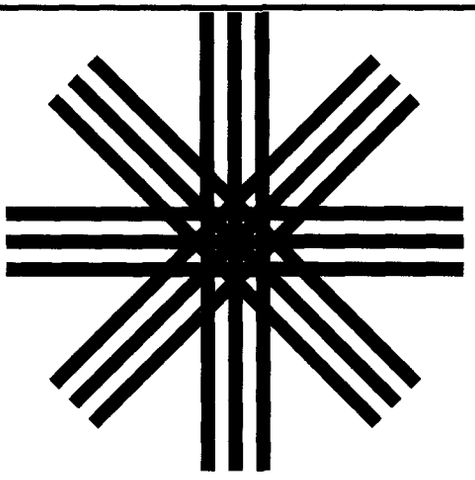
But of course the abortion leaders no more believe in pluralism than they believe in freedom. So long as it was helpful to use the rhetoric of pluralism and freedom, they were happy to do so. But as soon as they saw an opportunity to force all Americans to pay for abortion, they quickly embraced that opportunity, casually contradicting the principles they had up till now so strenuously professed.

How can the abortion movement so easily disregard its hitherto fundamental principles? Is it a simple case of inattention? Or hypocrisy? Perhaps. But I suspect the answer is to be found rather in the lack of intellectual integrity that has always characterized the abortion party: a lack of integrity shown in its persistent refusal to discuss the cardinal question regarding abortion, namely, whether the fetus is or is not a human person. People who lack intellectual integrity are incapable of holding intellectual principles. They know how to *profess* principles for public consumption, yes; but professing principles is one thing, truly holding them is something else. Such people can never rise to the level of conviction; the highest (or rather the lowest) they can reach is the level of propaganda.

Do I mean to say this about everyone who is (if you'll pardon the expression) prochoice? No, for among the rank and file there are many good-hearted dupes who truly believe that the abortion cause is the cause of freedom and pluralism. Now that the leadership has thrown off the mask, however, these folks will be able to remain faithful followers only by consuming larger and larger amounts of self-deception pills.

The thought occurs to me that earlier in the twentieth century there were one or two parties in the world that exhibited the following characteristics: they were utterly devoid of intellectual integrity; they were masters of propaganda; they had a great talent for switching principles at a moment's notice; and they practiced the fine art of mass homicide.

Dear me, I wonder why that bitter comparison popped into my head. After all, everyone realizes there is no resemblance between those earlier tyrannies and the genteel leadership of our late twentieth-century American abortion movement. □



THE GRAYMOOR PRIZE

The Friars of Atonement announce the fifth annual Graymoor Prize, to be awarded for the best essay on any aspect of ecumenical or interreligious affairs. Our previous winners have reported from England, Wales, Tanzania, Jerusalem, Eisenach, Germany, Strasbourg, and Chicago, among other places. From the Eritrean scholar Yacob Tesfai (1994) to the euphonious Anthea Dove (1993) to the exotic Ty Mam Duw Community (1992) to the formidable Ed Marciniak (1991), Graymoor winners have written about the difficulties as well as the satisfactions, the personal as well as the theological dimensions of ecumenical work. The prize is intended to encourage and support new ecumenical and interreligious ideas and perspectives. The award-winning submission, which may take the form of a scholarly or critical essay or a personal narrative, should appeal to the interests of the general educated reader.

Original and unpublished essays of approximately 2,500-4,000 words should be submitted to the editors of COMMONWEAL who will make the final decision following consultation with a panel of experts. The winning essay will receive $1,000 and will be published in COMMONWEAL. The editors reserve the right to select more than one winner or not to award the prize at all.

Deadline: October 3, 1994. Announcement of Prize: December 16, 1994. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's January 13, 1995, issue. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors after January 1.

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SHATTERING PHILOSOPHY'S MIRROR

A CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD RORTY

GORDON D. MARINO

For all too long, the mainstream of American philosophers wanted nothing to do with their European counterparts. With the exception of Anglo-analytic thinkers, from whom most of us were trying to take our cues, European philosophers were regarded as pseudo-philosophers. Indeed, I can recall a graduate seminar that I was in only ten years ago in which the professor read a few lines from a random page of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. We all guffawed as if to say, how could anyone be so thick as to take this metaphysical mumbo-jumbo for philosophy? For different reasons, similar judgments were passed upon American philosophers such as William James and John Dewey. Thanks in large part to therapeutic effects of the work of Richard Rorty, American philosophers have become less snobbish and more inclusive.

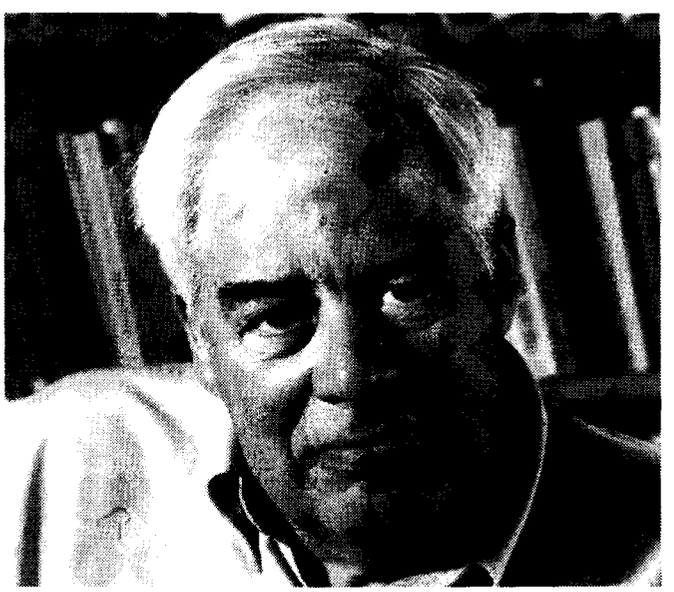
In addition to opening the American philosophical mind, Rorty has provoked and help sustain the debate over foundationalism in epistemology and ethics. This debate, which, more than any other, defines philosophy today, is a debate as to whether or not philosophers ought to continue spending their time trying to construct presuppositionless arguments capable of justifying their views to any and all rational creatures. Arguing that such projects are both hopeless and needless, Richard Rorty is the doyen of antifoundationalism. Obviously the relativism of Rorty's view is alien to Thomism and the Catholic natural law tradition. Still, Rorty's philosophical exploration of narrative and historical contingency should be of interest to adherents of biblical and revealed religion. But no matter what side you would be inclined to take in this debate, Rorty is essential reading for anyone eager to get a sense of philosophy in the present age.

Richard Rorty felt the bite of philosophy at a very tender age. In his early adolescence he was already keeping company with Plato, Dewey, and others. For the last forty years or so, he has been reflecting on the question of the value of philosophy. He has, of late, been publishing conclusions such as this:

> If we [philosophers] stop preening ourselves on our position at the top of the hierarchy of disciplines, stop identifying our professional practices with "rational thought" or "clear thought" we shall be in a better position to grant Dewey's point that our discipline is no more able to set its own agenda than is engineering or jurisprudence. Such an admission would help us to dispense with the idea that scientific and political developments require "philosophical foundations"—the idea that judgment must remain suspended on the legitimacy of cultural novelties until we philosophers have pronounced them authentically rational (*Philosophy and the Future*).

Contrary to all the sermons I have delivered in my Philosophy 101 class, Rorty proclaims that we do not need philosophy to underwrite our views of justice, knowledge, or almost anything else. If it is good for anything, it is for the rather marginal purpose of squaring apparently inconsistent theories. Thus for some time now, Rorty has been trying to talk philosophers out of their grandiose self-images. In the process, he has become one of the most influential and controversial philosophers in the world. And deservedly so—on both counts.

Not long ago, I traveled to the University of Virginia, where



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Rorty is the University Professor of Humanities (N.B., not philosophy). Before speaking with him, I was warned by an admiring quondam student that there is a certain irony about Rorty.

Over the years, Rorty has tried to show the extent to which philosophical theories are driven by metaphors. More self-consciously than other members of his guild, Rorty has cast a few images of his own. One of the metaphors that has stuck is the image of philosophy as a conversation. While Rorty may have dedivinized everything else, he has sacralized the idea of conversation. And yet, warned his student, he is not a very good conversationalist—at least not until you get to know him for a few years. A colleague of Rorty's offered a similar assessment, saying that she had met with him a number of times and found it very difficult to draw him into a dialogue. Besides "brilliant," the terms most frequently used to describe Rorty are "shy," "urbane," and "introverted." This character sketch was a recipe for an interviewer's nightmare. I rapped on Rorty's office door with a fear and trembling. My fears were not entirely in vain.

Rorty is occasionally described as genteel. I am convinced that this misconception derives from two sources—the elegance of his writing style and the color photo of him that appears on each of his last three books—twice on the back and once on the cover! In this waist-up snapshot Rorty is clad in a white coat and a blue oxford shirt, opened at the collar. The background is lush green sprinkled with pink impatiens. The image tells you that he must have a mint julep in his hand. Rorty's head is tilted. He looks relaxed and satisfied. There is a broad, warm smile upon his face—a smile that I never saw.

The Rorty that I met was a somewhat hunched and shuffling figure, dressed in drab colors. In his greeting, he does not give you the sense that he is particularly glad to see you. Rorty does not make a lot of eye contact. Ask him a question and he is likely to scrunch up for a moment, fold his hands on the table, look out the window, and respond. He speaks in a voice that is somewhere between subdued and melancholic. Psychoanalysts teach that we can learn a lot about a person by keeping a third eye on the way he or she makes us feel. Rorty made me feel like shaking him. As he leaned back in his chair and offered his monotonic life story, I had the distinct impulse to shout, "Cheer up, you've hit an intellectual gear that very few people reach, you've a wide and eager audience, and a great deal to say." But there are qualities about Rorty that speak above his reticence.

Unlike many of the masterminds who soon forget how quickly they will be forgotten, Rorty is devoid of pretensions. Attribute an idea to Rorty and he is more than likely to say that he got it from someone else. Academics reveal something important about themselves in the way they handle the often nebulous issue of intellectual debt. In both his conversations and his prefaces, Rorty is believably munificent. He seems on the whole to be refreshingly insouciant about racking up philosophical patents. The herd of Rorty's colleagues come to discussions as though it were almost always a case of mortal ego combat. Not Rorty. He does not get his back up when you press him with a question of potentially critical import. At one point in our discussion, I challenged him about his occasionally stated mission to dedivinize everything he possibly could. I suggested that he might be mistaken about the corrosive effects of the sacred. On my reckoning, it was an empirical question as to whether or not faith was salutary for a society. Rorty reflected for a moment and then easily conceded the point, which might seem highly unremarkable to anyone inexperienced in grilling philosophers about their published positions.

There is a gentleness about Rorty. The target of many vitriolic attacks, he rarely responds in kind. Nor is he dismissive. One of the things that Rorty found chafing about analytic philosophy was the tendency of its practitioners to pass judgment upon certain voices and exclude them from the conversation of philosophy. Rorty is able and willing to draw from a wide variety of philosophical descriptions. In a famous, or if you prefer infamous, footnote addressing the fact that one of his heroes, the metaphysician Heidegger, was a Nazi, Rorty remarks:

> On the general question of the relation between Heidegger's thought and his Nazism, I am not persuaded that there is much to be said except that one of the century's most original thinkers happened to be a pretty nasty character...but if one holds the view which I put forward...one will be prepared to find the relation between the intellectual and moral virtues, and the relation between a writer's books and other parts of his life, contingent (*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*).

The suggestion is that there is scarcely any connection between a philosopher's words and deeds, or his theory and character. Rorty is dead wrong on that issue and he himself is evidence of it. Ask Rorty almost any question and he will begin, "a pragmatist would say...." All too tersely stated, pragmatism is the view that there is no absolute truth. "Ideas become true just so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience" (William James). Rorty may have an ironical, which is for him to say potentially skeptical, view of everything else, but he is downright devout about his pragmatism and this is reflected in his character. Rorty is the kind of person that you would expect a pragmatist to be—democratic, tolerant, confident, and not one to dramatize either his life or his calling.

Rorty was born in 1931. An only child, he is the maternal grandson of Walter Rauschenbusch—one of the initiators of the social gospel movement in America. His parents were both free-lance writers who published in such magazines as *Harper's, Commonweal*, and *Commentary*. They were also active Trotskyites; active enough to use their home in the hills of northwestern New Jersey as a safe haven for one of Stalin's assassination targets. In a piquant autobiographical essay which appeared in the quarterly *Common Knowledge*, Rorty recalls:

> I grew up knowing that all decent people were if not Trotskyites at least socialists. I knew that poor people would always be oppressed until capitalism was overcome....I knew that the point of being human was to spend one's life fighting social injustice. But I also had private, weird,

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snobbish, incommunicable interests.

Such as an interest in wild orchids. As a teen-ager, Rorty took great pride in being able to find and identify (by their Latin names) seventeen species of wild orchid. "I was," he comments, "uneasily aware that there was something a bit dubious about this esotericism—this interest in socially useless flowers." Rorty continues:

> At fifteen I escaped from the bullies who regularly beat me up on the playground of my high school (bullies who, I assumed, would somehow wither away once capitalism had been overcome) by going off to the so-called Hutchins College of the University of Chicago. Insofar as I had any project in mind, it was to reconcile Trotsky and the orchids. I wanted to find some intellectual or aesthetic framework which would let me—in a thrilling phrase which I came across in Yeats—"hold reality and justice in a single vision."

Rorty came to the University of Chicago looking for an absolute which would enable him to justify one side of himself to the other. As Rorty quite candidly puts it, "I wanted a way to be both an intellectual and spiritual snob and a friend of humanity—a nerdy recluse and a fighter for justice." As an undergraduate, Rorty threw himself into the study of the great absolutists of Western culture, but he never found the overarching theory that he was looking for; save in the sense that he would eventually conclude that overarching theories are both illusory and unnecessary.

Having taken both his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Chicago, Rorty moved on to Yale to do his doctoral work in philosophy. After four years and a dissertation titled, "The Concept of Potentiality in Aristotle and the Seventeenth Century Rationalists," Dr. Rorty moved on to a two-year teaching stint at Wellesley. In 1961, the preeminent classicist Gregory Vlastos recruited Rorty to teach Aristotle at Princeton. He remained there for twenty-one years. In the seventies, Rorty developed a keen interest in continental philosophy, especially in the writings of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida. At the same time, he was circling back and becoming deeply absorbed in a study of John Dewey, the philosopher who was "always in the air" of his parents' home. As Rorty recounts it, at this time the judgment at Princeton and 98 percent of the philosophy departments around the country was that these were not serious philosophers. At a loss for colleagues with sympathetic interests, he put out feelers for another position, preferably one in a department other than philosophy. His fresh start began in 1982 when Rorty accepted the appointment he currently holds in the Department of the Humanities at the University of Virginia.

Rorty came to prominence in the late seventies with the publication of his epiphanic *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. When quizzed about the reception of this book, which has already been translated into six languages, Rorty replied, "Though disliked by most of my fellow philosophy professors, this book had enough success among nonphilosophers to give me a self-confidence I had previously lacked." It is true that Rorty took a few knocks, but the vast majority of the philosophers whom I have talked with consider *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* a not-so-minor classic. The philosopher Richard Bernstein called this work, "one of the most important and challenging books to be published by an American philosopher in the last few decades." In a recent telephone interview, Robert Pipin, chairperson of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, told me that he believed this book would be read by students for the next fifty to one hundred years. And it ought to be, as it was instrumental in breaking the stranglehold that the analytic approach to philosophy had upon the discipline at that time. How so?

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* Rorty argues that philosophers have been entranced by images and metaphors which much sooner than later became accepted as literal truths. Rorty deconstructs a number of these guiding images, the most important of which is the picture of the mind as a great mirror:

> It is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions. The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of mind as a great mirror containing various representations—some accurate, some not—and capable of being studied by pure, nonempirical methods. Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself.

Without this latter notion, the strategy common to Descartes and Kant—getting more accurate representations by inspecting, repairing, and polishing the mirror so to speak—would not

Richard E. McMullen

He Noticed

The tops. Screw and screw
them on. He never got done.
Unscrew and unscrew them.
He was never through. The doors. Pull
with both hands,
leaning back, heels dug in.
He couldn't open them.
Push with chest, arms, head.
He couldn't shut them.
The others, he noticed, made all
their things so heavy, so tight.

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have made sense. Without this strategy in mind, recent claims that philosophy consists of "conceptual analysis" or "phenomenological analysis" or "explication of meanings" or examination of the "logic of our language" or of "the structure of the constituting activity of consciousness" would not have made sense (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*). The activities in quotes mark the dead-end obsessions that define analytic philosophy. Pluck out the ocular metaphors and they should all disappear. That is, if philosophers could stop thinking of the mind as a mirror, they could excuse themselves from the impossible and unnecessary task of trying to go through the looking glass to establish that our images actually reflect the objects they purport to represent. In order to break the spell of this image, Rorty tries to convince his readers that the mirror image is just that—an image, that is, one description among many possible other descriptions, as opposed to a philosophical intuition with special claims to the truth. With this aim in mind, he offers a historical narrative explaining how and why this conception took such a tenacious hold upon the Western mind.

Understandably, many philosophers have read Rorty's work as a suicide of philosophy. He is, after all, trivializing a problem complex with which generations of philosophers have identified themselves. While Rorty denies that he is attempting to close the lid on philosophy, the calling of philosophy does not seem to have the same hold on him that it once did. After trying to rehearse some philosophical problems with him, and having thrice evoked a yawning response, I mentioned that he did not seem to find much of interest in the field today. Then I pressed him, "Is there any contemporary philosopher or philosophical problem that you do find interesting?" For the first and only time in our conversation Rorty seemed somewhat uncomfortable. After a long pause, he replied that he found the work of the feminist legal scholar, Catharine MacKinnon, engaging. That was it.

Let us examine for a moment the list of scribblers that bring a smile to Rorty's face. At one point in our discussion Rorty mentioned that there was no one that he profited more from reading than the lit crit and wiseacre, Stanley Fish. In a footnote to a recent essay, Rorty proclaimed that of the current generation of American intellectuals only Harold Bloom is certain to be read into the twenty-second century. It is clear that Rorty delights in the playful brilliance of Jacques Derrida. Amongst novelists, he scarcely ever mentions Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky, but the names Proust and Nabokov are always on his pen. What do all of these authors share in common?

Rorty's tastes are in witty, provocative, self-consciously aesthetic writing. He is also someone who is as obedient to his taste as some people are to their consciences. If he finds something boring that is reason enough to disregard it. If he finds it useless and boring that is all the more reason. And that is precisely how Rorty finds most social, moral, and political theory—useless and boring. Rorty confesses: "I share Nabokov's suspicion of general ideas when it comes to philosophers' attempts to squeeze our moral sentiments into rules for deciding moral dilemmas" (*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*).

Given the role of theory or general ideas in leftist critique, it is no wonder that Rorty's apostasy of theory has irked critics on the left. Rorty, who has publicly stated, "I think our country—despite its past and present atrocities and vices...is a good example of the best kind of society so far invented," is regarded by certain leftist thinkers as an apologist for the Haves. As they see it, Rorty would have a different opinion of the value of theory if he had his office among the Have-nots.

What got Rorty into trouble with thinkers on the left, got him in trouble with the right as well. Like the therapeutic discovered and so richly detailed by Philip Rieff, Rorty has a certain distrust of the yak yak yak of conscience. Rorty is of the deep-seated conviction that it is possible to be a self-consistent Nazi. What the Nazi lacks is not a theory of morality, but rather a heart, or the right set of feelings. In this regard, Rorty follows Hume and Schopenhauer. Again, Rorty confesses:

> ...there is no answer to the question "Why not be cruel?" There is no noncircular theoretical backup for the belief that cruelty is horrible. Nor is there any answer to the question "How do you decide when to struggle against injustice and when to devote yourself to private projects of self creation?"...I do not think there are any plain moral facts out there in the world, nor any truths independent of language, nor any neutral grounds on which to stand and argue that either torture or kindness are [*sic*] preferable to the other (*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*).

While critics on the left call Rorty "complacent," critics on the right chide him for being a relativist. Characteristically, Rorty rejects the charge of relativism by refusing to answer it. That is, he argues that "relativism" is a term in a vocabulary which he flatly rejects—a vocabulary that is intimately bound up with the fantastic project of providing rational foundations for our moral preferences. Rorty remarks, "The right's hostility is largely explained by the fact that the rightist thinkers don't think that it is enough just to prefer democratic societies. One also has to believe that they are objectively Good." Rorty doesn't.

Before taking leave, I asked Professor Rorty if I could get a glimpse of some of his most recent work. One of the walls of his quite humble office is packed with a post office of cubby holes, each of which contains a fresh manuscript. Rorty was generous enough to place a stack of his thoughts in my hand. His most recent essays bear titles such as, "Feminism and Pragmatism," "Love and Money," and "Tales of Two Disciplines." For all his rhetoric to the effect that our public or moral interests do not hold any natural rank over our private projects (e.g., reading Proust or searching for wild orchids), Rorty's private and public interests seem to be in natural sync. Rorty psychologizes that we can promote social justice only by expanding the circle of our community, by increasing the scope of our feeling of solidarity. While I would not want to offend him by describing him as a moralist, Rorty the sexagenarian is fighting what the youngster Rorty would have taken to be the good fight, the best way he knows how—by writing gleaming essays on social issues and the curriculum of our sentimental education. □

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IN THE PARACLETE I TRUST

WOMEN, THE PRIESTHOOD, & THE PATRIARCHY

MARIAN BURKHART

After discussions with angry women and after perusing the angry words of other women on the subject of the hierarchy and the possibility of ordaining women, I found myself wondering why the situation arouses so little ire in me. I have no desire to be a priest, it is true, but neither do I like to have my qualifications as a full-fledged human being called into question, nor do I like it when other women suffer such abasement. Yet I remain calm.

I understand the problem very well. Motherless from the age of nine, I grew up the daughter of one male chauvinist and the sister of another. It was recognized in the family that I was bright, a trait considered cute in a girl child. It was a quality I was expected to outgrow; I would settle for stenography, should I need at any point to earn some money; but, most important, I would smarten up enough to dumb down to get a husband. In the meantime, I was to practice serving that husband by serving my brother, and I was not to hold out for even the common courtesies of "please" and "thank you," for my brother's proper study was to learn to be a patriarch. He did.

But my father loved me, too, enough to wonder how wise it was to rear me in an ambience so unalleviatedly patriarchal. He had some doubts even about the wisdom of dumbing down, doubts nourished in his pragmatic mind by how little evidence I had given of being disposed to do so. Thus, when he learned of a girls' boarding school in a nearby town and discovered that the Benedictine nuns who ran it charged little and were ladies, he sent me there. What I found was a revelation. These women who took charge of me, these ladies, acted like gentlemen: They ran their own lives, cherished their own intelligence, and nurtured mine. No student was expected to dumb down, and those who seemed about to were mourned. How explain this paradox? How did such an institution occur not just within the context, but with the encouragement, of the patriarchal church?

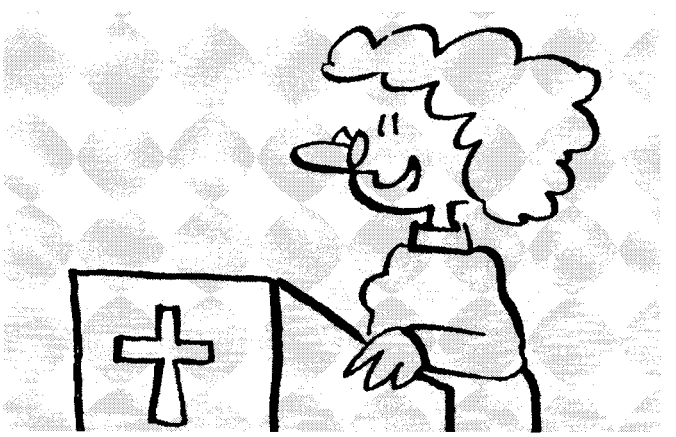
The answer is that the hierarchy may be made up of patriarchs, but they are Christian patriarchs, and Christianity modifies patriarchy, when it is attended to, as it modifies every other human attitude, habit, or idea, a modification that takes place in the light of at least two aspects of the Christian *Zeitgeist*.

MARIAN BURKHART, *a New Yorker, has taught college English and written often for* Commonweal.

The first is the fact of Mary, a wholly feminine person without whom Christianity would not be. Compare her with the female avatars of the Greeks. Hera, wife and mother, is a shrew. Aphrodite is a pain in the neck, light-minded, frivolous, and a troublemaker. Artemis is aloof. Irene, it is true, makes peace when she can, but then there are Eris and Ate, too. The only goddess whom the Greeks both approved and esteemed is Athene, sprung full-blown from the head of Zeus, and Zeus' daughter all right—no touch of the feminine about her. Henry Higgins's paradigm is she, a woman just like a man. It might be argued that these versions of the goddess are the work of men, that women might view the goddesses differently. Indeed, I think they did, but then Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are men, too, and what they wrote exalts the feminine.

Mary fulfills the traditional roles of women. She is wife and mother, and she is a virgin. No Miltonic "he for God, and she for God in him" here. Her relationship to God is direct, unmediated, and acceded to with great-souled courage. When Mary says, "Be it done unto me according to thy word," she may be submitting herself to God, but she is putting herself in jeopardy in a patriarchal society whose ethos declared that women taken in adultery were to be stoned. A gutsy gal, indeed, for if she trusted in God, she had no really strong reason yet to trust in Joseph. And consider with Joseph her power. To her eternal glory, she said "yes" to God, but her "yes" earns that glory because she could have said "no," thereby compelling God himself to change his plans.

Then there is the nature of the marriage with Joseph. To out-



"Today's sermon is titled 'The Siblinghood of Person....'"

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siders it may have looked like any other Near Eastern marriage, but its dynamics were radically altered. Mary may have baked the bread and darned the cloaks while he planed and sawed, but her needs and the needs of her child determined the course of their lives. To his eternal glory, Joseph recognized that to be a patriarch need not mean to dominate but rather to protect, and to protect, furthermore, a woman who was in no way merely an extension of her husband, a possession to be cared for because she was his. She wasn't. She was God's, and the child to whom she was devoted and for whom she required Joseph's devotion was not his child. A patriarch who thinks at all objectively about all of that has to revise from the bottom up his socially acquired and approved idea of what it means to be a patriarch.

In Galatians 3 and 4, Saint Paul discusses another patriarchy-modifying consequence of Christ's entry into human history. I started thinking about the passages when I followed an exchange of letters in the *Tablet* (London) about the felicity, or lack thereof, of Paul's use of the word "son" in Galatians 4: "But when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.' So that you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God." A gentleman, acting as lector in an English parish, wrote that the women in the congregation had need of consciousness-raising because they took no umbrage at Paul's sexist language. After trying to determine what other word Paul could have used to convey the whole of his message, I found myself entirely on the side of the women. To object to "son" is to undermine the gift of God Paul sought to clarify. No other term will do.

One must go back to Galatians 3 where Paul says that for those who have been baptized into Christ "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ." He is talking about legal rights, particularly the right to inherit. In the ancient Middle East, Greeks had certain rights of citizenship not open to Jews, but Jews had rights as sons of Abraham not open to Greeks. In Christ, these distinctions are erased, as are the distinction between the freeman who can inherit and the slave who cannot, between the male who can and the female who cannot.

In the climactic sentence in which he expounds the richness of the Christian inheritance, could Paul have called us "sons and daughters" of God? That would be to reintroduce the difference. Middle Eastern patriarchs loved their daughters, as my father loved me, but at the time of Paul only sons could inherit. How about "children of God"? But children, simply because they are children, cannot exercise fullness of right, can inherit in form only. "Offspring"? But that is a term technical and cold, reminding us that one's heirs in law can be second cousins twice removed whom one does not know and cannot love. Only the son was a longed-for heir. He could, indeed, inherit and was, indeed, beloved. What Paul is doing is baptizing the concept of son. In no way does he diminish the role of the son. Instead he extends it to include all of us whom Christ has received in baptism—making all of us freeborn "sons" who can inherit. What I experienced at Saint Scholastica's Academy in Canon City, Colorado, was Christian sonship in act. I entered the church.

That my school was not really an aberration, no matter how many Sister Ignatiuses elsewhere explained it all or inveighed against patent leather shoes, the history of the church demonstrates. Americans have always protected their innocence of history, and Catholics since Vatican II, in being less prone than in the past to honor the saints, have tended to ignore that window of history, too. But even briefly opened it will show a long line of women—Saint Scholastica, herself, right up to Mother Seton, Mother Cabrini, Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, and Mother Teresa—who in founding orders have not only worked out their own salvation but directed women, and men, too, to a new aspect of sanctity. There are other Teresas: Saint Teresa of Avila, a Doctor of the church, at whose feet sat Saint John of the Cross, and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, whose little way is an approach to spirituality profoundly original, so apt in its insights that she may be declared a Doctor, too. And how about Saint Catherine of Siena, another Doctor, who, having cleared the nepotists and simonists out of Rome, rapped the knuckles of the pope in Avignon until he agreed to come back where he belonged?

Thus, I find myself in this matter echoing Julian of Norwich, another woman whose intelligence and spirituality the church nourished, as she carried Christ's message that "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well." If it is God's will that women be priests, in the fullness of God's time, they will be, and they will be ordained under the aegis of the Roman hierarchy. Not because the hierarchy is made up of patriarchs, for patriarchs qua patriarchs are no more likely to rethink customs that put them in the catbird seat than are—well—matriarchs. But these men are Christians who in the light of the Holy Ghost meditate upon Mary and read Galatians. In the Paraclete I trust. □

Catherine McLaughlin

Instinct

That cat flying its hull
hellbent into the wind
foams its own steep wake
but only
because the sails strain against the sailor
who leans, stretching sinew, farther out
backward to danger,
a taut torso riding on air
flayed by salt
trusting only
the line she clings to.

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TILL DEATH DO US PART

'FOUR WEDDINGS & A FUNERAL'

The great strength of Richard Curtis's script for the comedy, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, isn't its dialogue (though there are many funny lines), nor its characterizations (which keep the plot humming but are rarely interesting in themselves), nor the passages of physical humor (only a cut above the better TV sitcoms). Curtis's special triumph here is in the sheer *arrangement* of the action, the crafting of a plot in which events and character quirks rhyme, contrast with, reverse, and echo one another as the hero, Charles, a young man who despairs of ever finding true love, staggers through the five ceremonies of the title.

Observe the way people from one gathering reappear at a later one in a very different light simply because they are performing different functions. A seminarian who's just a shy guest at the first wedding becomes the presiding priest at the second and nearly capsizes the wedding vows with his spectacular ineptitude. (A masterful cameo by the genius of discomfort, Rowan Atkinson.) An unassuming gay man, usually overshadowed by his rambunctious companion at weddings, becomes eloquent in his pain when eulogizing that same companion at the funeral. A young woman notices an attractive deaf man at the first marriage and courts him at a later one with her new skill in sign language. The same deaf man (Charles's brother) signs his enthusiasm for a woman's bust but Charles deliberately mistranslates ("Ah, Scotland! Beautiful mountains!") in order to spare the young lady embarrassment. But several scenes later, Charles mistranslates some verbal remarks into sign language for the precise purpose of embarrassing his brother who's just done Charles an ill turn.

Curtis's marvelous crossword puzzle of a plot has been deftly filled in by director Mike Newell with an economy that is sometimes funny in itself, as when a rapid succession of close-ups of ringless fingers tells hapless best man Charles that no one has a substitute for the wedding ring he has forgotten. And Newell has cast a lot of talented actors, led by Hugh Grant as Charles, and drawn sterling work from them.

Yet there's a dead flower in this wedding bouquet and it's right in the center of the cluster. The basic action of this comedy is as time-honored (or time-worn) as they come: a young person's search for true love. When Charles, near the fade-out, catches up with Andie MacDowell in the rain and asks her to consider "not being married to me for the rest of your life," it's just a hip way of popping the traditional question. We are meant to envision them enjoying a marriage of true minds to which no man should admit impediment.

Alas, the impediment is already there, courtesy of scriptwriter Curtis. In his effort to portray the MacDowell character as

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a socially and sexually liberated woman, Curtis has gone off the deep end and created instead an emotionally manipulative and sexually feckless predator. I have no problem with the fact that she goes to bed with Charles right away, for this may be just a modern instance of love at first sight. But, when they reencounter after the second wedding, she is firmly engaged to another—older, richer—man. She goes to bed with Charles again with no apparent hesitation. What are we to make of this? Just a physical attraction? If you believe that, just listen to the throbbing of strings on the sound track whenever these two clinch. And later MacDowell has Grant review her choices of wedding dresses (this woman isn't callous?) and ticks off a lightning-fast appraisal of the thirty-three lovers in her past. Just the highlights, mind you, but with a lot less thoughtfulness than she brought to the inspection of her bridal ensemble. At her wedding reception she makes a little speech that put my teeth on edge with its fatuousness and airhead self-satisfaction (I think it was the quote from John Lennon that killed it for me), and there's nowhere in the film a single indication that she has any feeling at all for her groom. Since his most salient feature is his wealth, are we to consider her a mere gold-digger? It's clear that neither director nor scriptwriter thinks so. Those strings on the sound track are singing. But why does Charles seem so sure that his lady love's list of bedmates is going to stop at number thirty-three?

I wouldn't be complaining about any of this if *Four Weddings* were an ironic black comedy or a satire or a cynical farce à la Feydeau. But it's not. It's an attempt at wholehearted humane comedy, the sort that needs a wholehearted happy ending, a conclusion that settles all doubts and gives the viewer a taste of heaven. The filmmakers seem to think they have provided one. But I was left with a taste in my mouth much too sour to be celestial.

Everything in this movie is wonderful except its core.

RICHARD ALLEVA

MEDIA

SOOTHING MUSIC

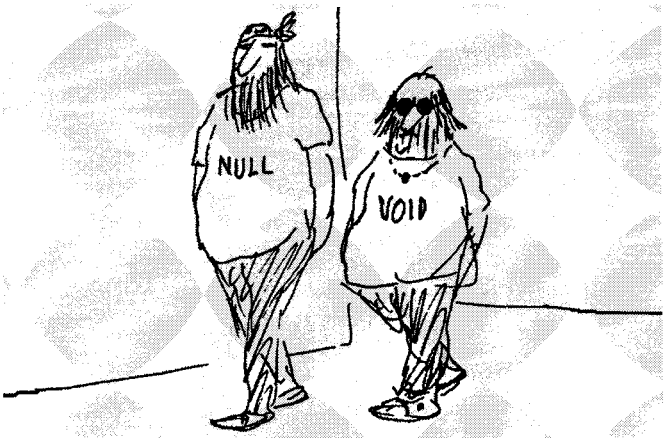
FOR THOSE IN A COMA

Recently, I've written in this space about Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Eric Clapton. At the suggestion of my editors, I headed for the local CD Warehouse to learn—and to report to you—on what New Age music is all about.

Here's the report: *Nada. Nichts. Rien.* Nothing. As Garry Trudeau paraphrased it some years ago, air pudding, man. New Age music, what can I tell you, makes elevator-piped-in sound get-down funky. Almost.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

"New Age," in case you've been in a sensory deprivation chamber since Reagan's first term, is our own, distinctly



American and distinctly late-twentieth-century millennial myth. A loose amalgam—actually, a kind of spiritual *pousse-café*—of primordial nature-religion, nonsectarian pentecostalism, and California Marin-County-I'm-okay-you're-okay wussitude. Its central tenet, such as it is, is that the time is at hand when all people shall be happily loving brothers and sisters, all conflicts resolved, and all stress banished under the benevolent sign of Aquarius, which our planet entered sometime in the eighties. And, oh yeah: there's no Death. Just merging into the universal Oneness of Oneness and maybe coming back as a higher life form (me, I'm coming back as a beagle).

Now as you can imagine, this theology—Theology Lite, actually—doesn't exactly make it in South Central L.A. or Bedford-Stuyvesant or Cabrini Green. It's apocalypse for the well-heeled or for those who have the *option* to drop out of the well-heeled. One of my New Age buddies, who hangs out around the Santa Barbara campus, is named—says so on his driver's license—Jesus Christ. He believes in peace and brotherhood and the goodness of all things and he does no real harm, but then neither does Velveeta Cheese. One of the chief theoreticians of New Age thought—if the concept, "theory," even applies here—is the blissed-out priest Matthew Fox. In *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Fox writes that "the sacramental consciousness of panentheism develops into a transparent and diaphanous consciousness wherein we can see events and beings as divine."

Say what? My teacher and ghostly father Harold Bloom, in *The American Religion*, wonderfully observes that if you substitute the word "juice" for "consciousness" and "oranges" for "divine" in that sentence, it makes quite as much sense. Perhaps, alas, the ultimate *Dictionnaire philosophique* entry for New Age is "A metaphysics that Shirley MacLaine can dig."

One reason I called New Age distinctly American and contemporary is that it's as much a marketing concept as it is a concept concept. New Age—the crystals, the music, the zodiac-sign paintings—*sells*. It sells to the affluent, the spiritually and imaginatively undernourished children of the senescent American Dream, whose epic poem is "The Brady Bunch" and whose ineradicably human yearning for the holy is thwarted by the irresistibly contemporary seduction of the suburban. It's like Zima: a nondrink drink, a user-friendly sublime, which is no damn sublime at all.

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But you want to hear about the music. Just as New Age thought has, really, no thought, so New Age music is not really *a* music. (Think about that glorious product, "Real Turkey Pastrami.") When I told you that its final significance was *Nichts*, I didn't mean the stuff was bad. There *is* no bad music. (I even, to the bemusement of my orthodox pals, have a couple of Klezmer CDs.) I meant that it's almost good but, like the philosophy from which it takes its name, hampered by a kind of ferocious obsession with pleasantness. If New Age "thought" is fatally flawed by its resolute refusal to acknowledge a concept of Evil, New Age music is hobbled by its studied—I'd say, neurotic—avoidance of complexity, dissonance, and minor chords.

Take Kenny G., the soprano saxophone player whom Bill Clinton, predictably and regrettably, likes. "Songbird" is his one, so far, top-forty hit, and it's all major chords and doodle-doodle pretty elaborations on a simple, virtually children's-song theme. Not that there's anything wrong with children's songs. Most of the major themes of Mozart, Wagner, and Thelonius Monk—to name only three gods—could easily be sung by little girls skipping rope on the playground. The thing is, though, that Mozart, Wagner, and Monk *built* on that, while Kenny just stays and *stays* there. I listen to the tune and I think, hey, man, I wish I had your chops; and I wish you had John Coltrane's daring—or at least a bit of it.

Take Enya, the darkly beautiful Irish singer-composer-lyricist-producer whose breakaway hit was "Oronooko Flow" ("Sail Away"—if you've driven a car with the radio on in the last two years, you've heard it). New Age music leans heavily toward the Celtic, or the pseudo-Celtic: it has, don't you know, the aura of the aboriginal. (If I had a dollar for every New Age disc with a Stonehenge-inspired cover, bills would be paid up till next November.)

Or take "Temple of Venus," which my friend at the CD outlet tells me is a steady seller. No personnel or instrumentation are listed, but it's got to be a synthesizer doing sixty minutes of vaguely Indian-style pulse music. The only information on the cover is the following: "The separation of the genders as a precondition for the will to unify: the plan of Creation. Eros and Sexus are the two sides of the most powerful energy streams, deployed with the purpose of binding two incomplete halves perpetually seeking to be one, and which will be merged into a complete whole."

Say *what*? This out-oranges even the redoubtable Father Fox.

In fact, most of the stuff I've listened to vibrates among three recognizable musical traditions. First, Celtic and American Bluegrass folk music, with sparse instrumentation and simple, hard-to-get-out-of-your-head melodies. Second, the kind of jazz we used to call "cool" or "West Coast," as in the early Chico Hamilton Quintet, the Dave Brubeck Quartet with Paul Desmond, and the Modern Jazz Quartet (together for thirty years and still perfect). In fact, the brilliant pianist George Winston, whose early-eighties recordings for Windham Hill helped establish both the music and the Windham Hill label, was perceived as a jazz player before the more lucrative New Age moniker was invented. And third, a kind of music that I shall here name, for the first time, porno-pop. If you've ever seen an X-rated film then you know that steady, rhythmic, unobtrusive soundtrack that starts just around when Things Begin to Get Heavy. It's music *designed* not really to be listened to: and now people are buying it to—presumably—listen.

If this sounds like I'm saying most New Age music is as vapid as the knee-jerk-liberal, vegetarian-benevolent-goofy philosophy from which it takes its name: bingo. There are, as in every venue, some mightily talented folks out there: Yanni, David Torn, and Philip Aaberg come immediately to mind. But on the whole, the music is as finally unsatisfactory as its ideological parent. Compare to it, the serious and challenging minimalism of composers like Philip Glass or John Adams, and you begin to realize its vacuity: it's as ultimately boring as rap, but it's what the suburban parents of the kids who listen to rap are listening to.

What is interesting about it is just its large, and growing, share of the market. Why do people listen to this stuff when they could be hearing, say, "Charlie Parker Plays the Cole Porter Songbook"?

I blame Reagan, sort of. As we approach century's end, and as we still reel from one of the most unprecedented (and unpresidented) eras of cynicism in our history, New Age—the philosophy and the music—offers us the illusion that we haven't raped the planet, that we're not becoming wretched and soulless technologues, that we are still nice people. It's a seductive and dangerous simplicity: it's morning in America, and if you believe in fairies, clap your hands. FRANK McCONNELL

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Peterson's crash diet

FACING UP
How to Rescue the Economy from Crushing Debt & Restore the American Dream
Peter G. Peterson
Simon & Schuster, $22, 411 pp.

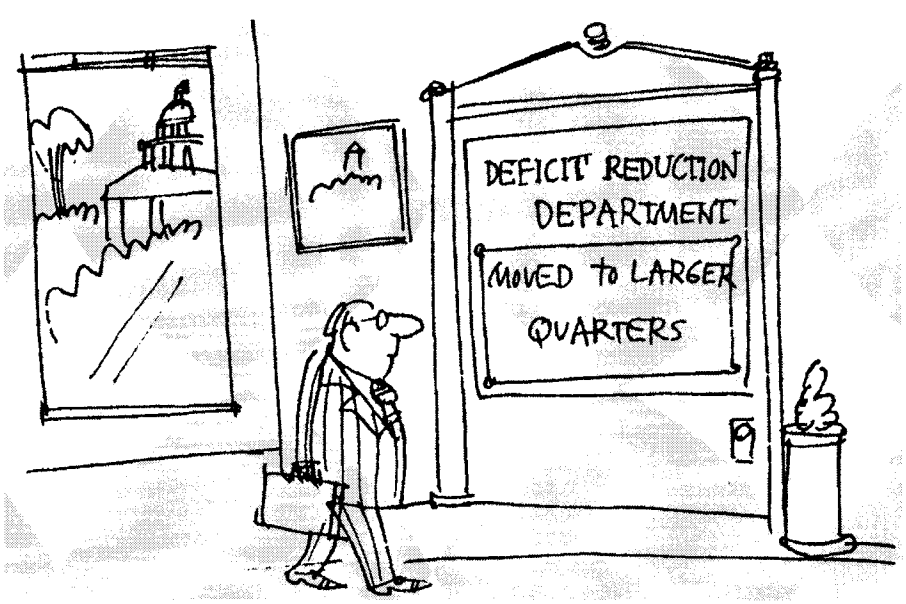
Jay R. Mandle

Peter G. Peterson is a former cabinet member in the Nixon administration and the kind of conservative who, with the ascendancy of the New Right, has been largely displaced in the Republican party's leadership. Wanting to preserve the United States' well-being, he watched in horror as crackpot economic nostrums, dressed up as "supply-side economics," let the country's "infrastructure crumble, its productivity dwindle, its savings evaporate, and its budget and borrowing burgeon." He writes that as "the mad drunken bash was on in Washington and the debt party grew more careless and frenzied with each passing day," he became *persona non grata* at the Republican White House. Gradually he drifted into political opposition concerned "about mounting U.S. deficits, dwindling savings and investment, and slow productivity growth—as well as the huge bill for our present consumption we were leaving to our children and grandchildren."

What fundamentally motivates Peterson's book is the country's lagging productivity performance. In two of the handsomely produced charts which constitute an appendix to this book, Peterson shows that U.S. productivity growth has, since the early 1970s, seriously lagged behind both the advanced countries of the world and our own historical experience. This lag accounts for the stagnation in household incomes experienced over this same time period. Peterson is motivated to restore the economic security of the people of the country by reinvigorating the economy's rate of productivity and technological growth.

Peterson's strategy to restore economic health to the country is to reduce the federal budgetary deficit by the beginning of the twenty-first century, while at the same time increasing the level of government investment in infrastructure. To do so he proposes an increase of $320 billion in taxes and reductions of $288 billion in government expenditures. Among the latter are substantial decreases in entitlement expenditures, largely accomplished by cutting benefits for households with above median incomes. In addition, Peterson would raise revenue by taxing entitlement benefits, would institute a rise in the Social Security retirement age, cut defense spending and discretionary expenditures, and introduce a variety of schemes to curb governmental health-care spending, while at the same time extending health-care insurance to the uninsured. Finally, the largest single source of savings would be the interest payments which the government would no longer be required to pay, amounting to $282 billion by the year 2004.

Peterson believes that a reduction in entitlement programs can be implemented without putting at risk the well-being of the poor. This is so because he calculates that more than 50 percent of government entitlements went to households earning more than $30,000. This may be true, but Peterson is not really convincing that cuts to the middle class can be done without harming households which are in genuine need. In defense of his program he is very critical of the economist Alicia H. Munnell. She defends extending benefits to the non-poor on the grounds that only in doing so could the poor be sure to obtain the help they needed. In response to Munnell's argument that "programs for the poor tend to be poor programs," Peterson writes "this is stunning. Benefits to the elderly poor are, as they should be, sacrosanct." But eighteen pages earlier, Peterson provides evidence in support of Munnell's argument,



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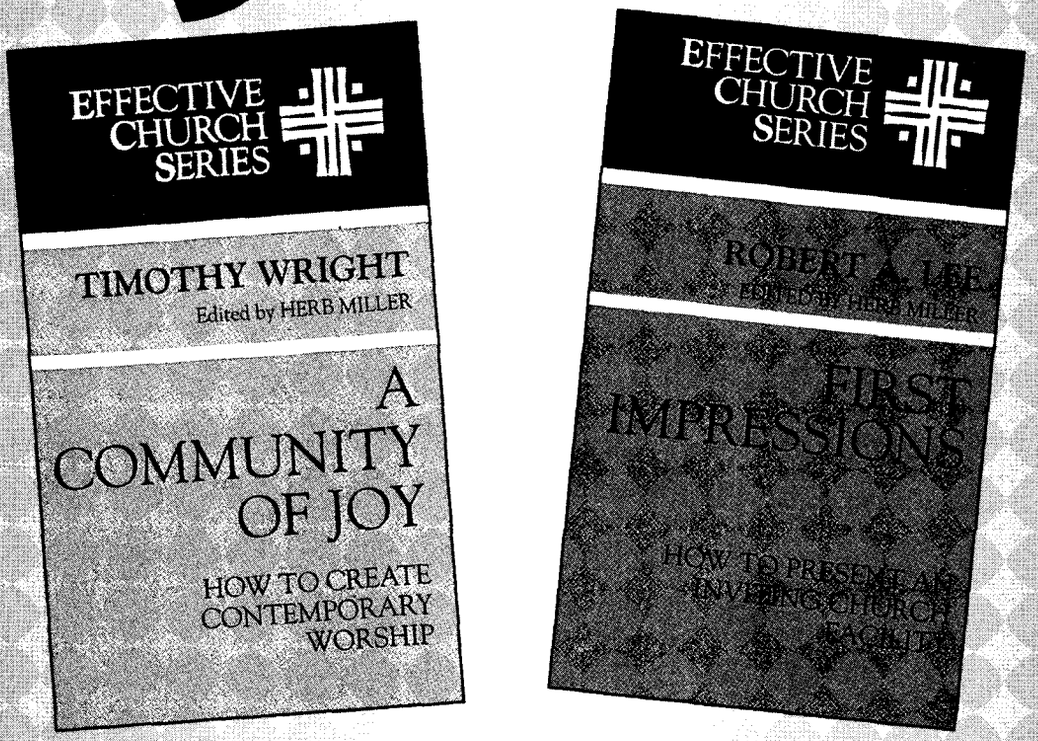

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and thereby undermines the validity of his own, in pointing out that "inevitably, those who needed the public help the most—especially the poor and the young—were not so adept at pushing to the front of the line." If this is the case, then the kind of cuts envisioned in this volume can hardly be expected to exempt the poor.

But the real problem with Peterson's approach lies not in this kind of political misjudgment. Rather it lies in his economics, and specifically in his single-minded commitment to the belief that increasing savings by reducing the budget deficit is the key to the restoration of rapid productivity growth. The analytic pivot for his policy prescription is his "rule of thumb" that a 1-percent increment in productivity will require an increase in investment of 6 to 8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Since a government deficit reduces the savings available for investment, Peterson reasons that the goal of raising productivity growth can be achieved by eliminating that deficit and using all of that money in new investment.

Simply put, Peterson's confidence that increasing the pool of savings in this way will accelerate productivity growth is unwarranted. In a book full of data, it is striking that one important and easily obtained data set is not mentioned at all. That is, during the years of U.S. productivity decline, investment did not fall at all. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, gross private investment as a share of GDP hovered at around 17 percent with no tendency to fall until the early 1990s. It is true that a substantial fraction of this investment was financed by overseas savers. But whatever the source of its financing, declining investment was not the reason for falling productivity growth rates. Peterson's strategy, to accelerate productivity growth by increasing investment, is not directed to the right disease.

Further, Peterson gives us no reason at all to believe that the vast increase in savings which a massive reduction in the deficit would produce will find productive outlets. As a result, he is much too cavalier in considering the issue which motivated Keynes in the 1930s. The risk is that by reducing consumption in the name of increasing savings, the economy will go into a downward spiral caused by declining consumption. In this case, what the government does not spend, if not made up by an increase in investment, could well trigger falling production and employment.

Peterson offers a program that is unacceptable because the risks associated with it far outweigh its likelihood of success. Unleashing a massive deficit-cutting program could further overwhelm the poor, trigger a recession or worse, and still not solve the productivity problem. We do need a strategy which will accelerate productivity growth. But it will have to be more nuanced than Peterson's in simultaneously addressing the needs of the poor and the economy. □

HAITI'S BISHOPS TURN THEIR BACKS

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HAITI
Political and Social Change
Anne Greene
Michigan State University Press, $28.95, 312 pp.

John P. Hogan

The role of the Catholic church in Haiti's desperate struggle has been both celebrated and maligned, and rightly so. Anne Greene's account of the church's part in the overthrow of Jean-Claude Duvalier evokes memories of the high point of Haitian church history. It also provokes questions about Haiti's current plight.

The first two chapters present overviews of church and state in Latin America and Haiti. Unfortunately, the treatment is too superficial to create the needed context. Key actors and events are left out. For example, I was dismayed that there is no mention of Charlemagne Péralte, the resistance fighter executed by the U.S. occupying forces in 1919.

These initial chapters indicate the dominate role played by the United States in Haitian history. U.S.-Haitian diplomatic blunders are sprinkled throughout the text. Greene makes ample use of early church documents and deals extensively with the seeds of twentieth-century church-state tensions: the long battle surrounding the Concordat of 1860, which granted the government approval over naming bishops; the stormy anti-Voodoo campaigns of the hierarchy even in the face of widespread Voodoo practice on the part of rural Catholics; the influence of eighteenth-century French anticlericalism and its rekindling because of the Catholic church's support of the U.S. occupation from 1919 to 1935.

The meat of the volume is in two chapters covering the rule of Jean-Claude Duvalier, 1971-86. During this period, a new concept of mission, involving a prophetic outreach toward rural Haitians and away from the urban, mulatto elite, was reinforced by liberation theology, a native clergy, and the growth of basic Christian communities. This new pastoral plan put the church on a collision course with the government. The church shifted its attention to the countryside, working in education, economic development, health, and literacy. Most important, it trained peasant leaders. The changed approach was clearly a preferential option for the poor tailored to Haitian needs, including a homegrown, Scripture-based adaptation of Catholic social thought and liberation theology's action-reflection-praxis methodology. In spite of these changes, Greene quotes a U.S. embassy spokesman, "...religion was not an influential institution in Haitian national affairs." As the heat was turned up on Jean-Claude, the author rightly points out the shortsightedness of such an assessment.

The book goes on to document the seminal role played by the Haitian Conference of Religion (CHR) and the impact made by John Paul II in his 1983 visit. The Holy Father's cry that "things must change" electrified Haitians and just about electrocuted Baby Doc. In December 1983, the

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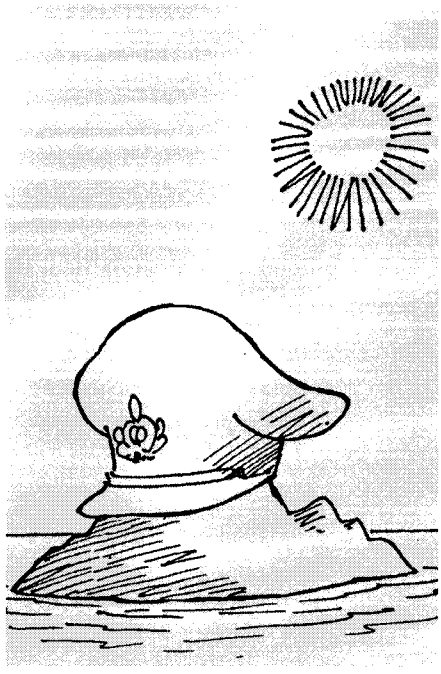
bishops issued their *Charte de L'Eglise pour la Promotion Humaine* which endorsed programs for peasant organization, literacy, and rural development. The CHR, *Ti Legliz, Caritas, Bon Nouvel,* and numerous church-related rural training centers sprang into action and mobilized the rural sector.

Greene is emphatic in pointing out the focal part played by *Radio Soleil*, the Catholic station, and its director, Father Hugo Triest, a Missionhurst priest. The station was the cement holding efforts together.

The death knell for Jean-Claude began with the trumped-up referendum on July 22, 1985. Father Triest predicted fraudulent elections and his predictions proved accurate. *Soleil* reporters followed the bogus voters around Port-au-Prince as they were transported by government bus in order to vote early and often. In spite of the massive boycott, the government immediately announced that 90 percent of the people voted and that 99.98 percent supported Duvalier. Power was cut off at *Radio Soleil* and Father Triest was arrested. The next day a Belgian missionary was beaten to death with a nail-studded club. Since the priest looked like Father Triest, many suspected a case of mistaken identity. On July 24, Triest and two other missionaries were expelled. But the events caused the pot to boil over. Finally food strikes and the November 8 massacre by military and *macoutes* (Duvalier's personal special forces) in Gonaives, coupled with the closing of *Radio Soleil* on December 4, brought the people into the streets. In January, the U.S. embassy weighed in by refusing to recertify Haiti for foreign assistance. The military continued, true to form, by turning machine guns on innocent civilians in the city of Leogane. A week later on February 7, 1986, Jean-Claude Duvalier drove his own BMW to the airport and exile.

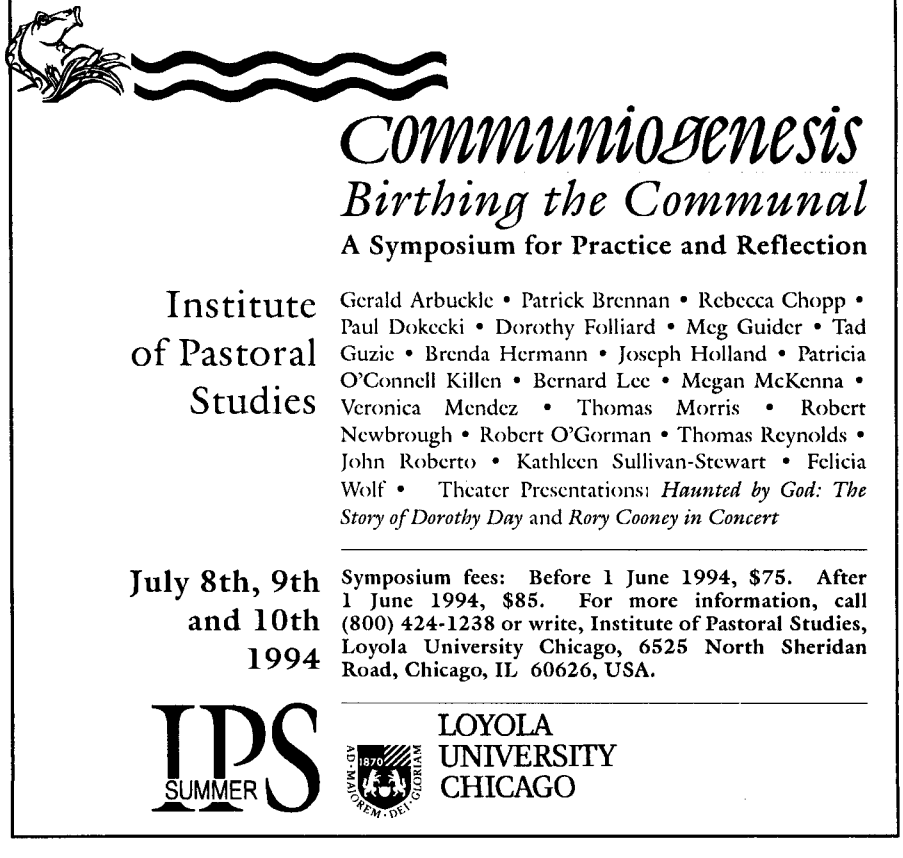
Greene is rightly enthusiastic in her praise of "priests...nuns, development, literacy and media workers...who had taken to heart the papal injunctions and conference messages to work with the poor....Many of them repeatedly risked their lives on behalf of justice for the poor." It was, indeed, the high point in Haitian church history.



The two final chapters discuss the post-Duvalier period and briefly the Aristide presidency. Unfortunately, they appear to be quick add-ons with glaring omissions. There is no mention of the constitutional elections of March 29, 1987, in which the church played a key role.

While the book addresses a most important topic, overall it is a disappointment. The author makes good use of written sources but appears to have little first-hand knowledge of the church. Historical accuracy would have been enhanced by some elucidation of the distinction between the hierarchy and the church at the base, a subject much discussed in Haiti. Peasants refer to *Ti Legliz*, the "little church"; priests and sisters often used the *Lumen gentium* term "People of God." Episcopal statements did provide cover for church workers but it was clearly the church at the base which led the way in the overthrow of Baby Doc. As Greene indicates in a note on page 209, the bishops and the papal nuncio might well have been reluctant followers.

A second criticism reflects a profound misreading of events and does not even follow from the text. In a bewildering statement, the author contends that "the rural sector did not participate in the overthrow of President Duvalier." On the contrary,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it was precisely the rural *Groupmans*, *Tet Ansamn* groups, local *Caritas* organizations, and the *Ti Legliz* linked up by the *Radio Soleil* transmitter that rallied the cities to action.

The church in Haiti had a moment of glory. "*Viv Legliz*" was a common chant during the resistance and overthrow of Baby Doc. Subsequently, church people, often as martyrs, helped to rid Haiti of Generals Namphy and Avril. The church at the base is still resisting dictatorship and praying for democracy. It is still being hunted and killed. Things have not changed much—except that the silence of the bishops is all the more deafening.

Confronted with 4,000 killed by a brutal military, 40,000 boat people, rising neo-Duvalierism, a diplomatic impasse (if indeed there ever was a diplomatic opening), and what appears to be a tentative but growing armed insurgency, what should the church's stance be? Why does the church, which was able to mobilize the peasants and the urban poor to dump a dictator, now appear so powerless to help create and support viable political institutions? Most importantly, why is the official church so fearful of supporting one of her own who took the message to heart? □

REVIEWERS

JAY R. MANDLE *is professor of Economics at Colgate University. He is the co-author, with Louis A. Ferleger, of the recently published book,* A New Mandate: Democratic Choices for a Prosperous Economy *(University of Missouri Press).*

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DAVID HOLLENBACH, S.J., *recently published* Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Philosophy, *edited with R. Bruce Douglass (Cambridge University Press). He is Margaret O'Brien Flatley Professor of Catholic Theology at Boston College.*

REMEMBER ARTICLE 1, SECTION 8

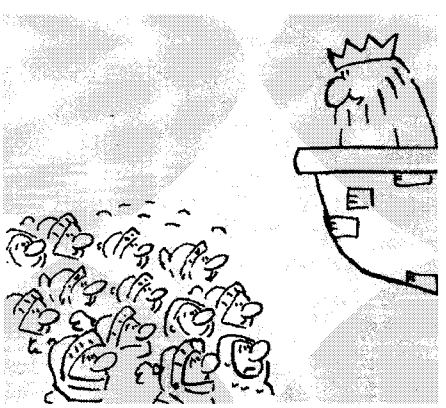
WAR AND RESPONSIBILITY
Constitutional Lessons of Vietnam and Its Aftermath
John Hart Ely
Princeton University Press, $24.95, 244 pp.

James Finn

In his first year in office, President Bill Clinton chose to concentrate his attention and energies on domestic policies. Of his foreign policy, it seems fair to say that he has none. On the major issues that risked substantial military involvement—Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti—he has made left turns, right turns, and U-turns, disconcerting friends and critics alike. But on one foreign policy issue he has stood firm: In October 1993, Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) indicated that he was going to introduce a senatorial amendment that would set conditions for the use of troops in Haiti unless there was a national security emergency. Presumably the resolution would set a precedent for other countries and situations. President Clinton immediately responded. He would strongly oppose, he said, any congressional effort to limit his ability to make foreign policy or to exercise his authority as commander in chief. The president's legal advisers added that such an amendment would be unconstitutional because it would restrict "the right of the president to make foreign policy." Dole rapidly backtracked. He did not intend, he said, to offend either the Constitution or the president, and he acknowledged that if he were president his stance would be very much like Clinton's. When a version of the Dole amendment was put to a senatorial vote, it was defeated 81 to 19. Congress clearly sided with the president.

That incident had the life-span of a day lily—very short. But it was only one in a long span of far more important incidents that reveal strong tensions between American presidents and the Congress in foreign-policy decisions that threaten or involve the use of military power. However, according to John Hart Ely, an expert on the constitutional questions, Robert Dole was right initially and he, the president, and Congress subsequently took a misguided path. Stated briefly, our Constitution invests Congress with certain foreign-policy powers, specifically that of declaring war. The president can engage the armed forces in war without such prior authorization only to "repel sudden attacks." Once war is authorized by Congress, the armed forces are quite properly under control of the commander in chief. Some qualifications are called for here, but they do not change this major assertion: It is the right of Congress, not the president, to declare war. This is the gravamen of the case that Ely presents in this short, technical, incisive, and readable book.

So accustomed have most of us become to believe that the right and obligation to shape foreign policy are lodged firmly in the executive branch that we tend to believe that strong congressional efforts to have a voice are intrusive. Yet Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution is unequivocal. It states that Congress shall have the power to declare war. And, in Ely's summary of the related powers : "To Congress also are granted the powers to raise and support armies, to provide and maintain a navy, to make rules for the government



"It's not *a crusade, boys—it's just a peace-keeping force."*

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and regulation of the armed forces, to provide for calling forth, organizing, and disciplining the military, to grant letters of marque and reprisal, and to make rules concerning captures."

Like other articles of the Constitution this was carefully considered by those who composed it. Madison, to offer but one commentary, wrote: "The Constitution supposes, what the history of all governments demonstrates, that the executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care, vested the question of war in the legislature."

If this is so clear, how has our understanding of it become so muddled? How have ordinary citizens and legal experts come to believe that the authority to declare war does, and properly should, reside in the executive office? Why, for example, was Clinton's allocation of troops to Somalia—where military engagement loomed as a real possibility—not more publicly questioned?

Modern critics have tended to dismiss or obscure this clear separation of powers by arguing that modern wars are seldom "declared," that such a restriction on the president's powers is obsolescent in today's world, and that, in any case, actual practice has effectively amended the "war clause."

Ely will have none of this. With clearly stated reasons he dispenses with these arguments. He then examines the byplay between the executive and the legislative branches during the Vietnam era, the "secret war" in Laos and Cambodia, and President George Bush's successful effort to gain congressional approval for Desert Storm. Each of these yields "constitutional lessons" that his subtitle promises. After all these years it is still distressing to see pinned down, like a specimen butterfly, the Congress of the Vietnam period, to contemplate the pusillanimous behavior of those many who authorized each phase of the war as it developed, but with a "studied ambiguity" that allowed them subsequently to disclaim responsibility for their decisions. The "secret wars," on the other hand, did an end-run around Congress, thus precluding the possibility that it could exercise its proper function. Different from both of these cases is that of the Persian Gulf War, for which President Bush skilfully obtained the necessary congressional authority.

Ely does not intend his analysis to be simply an academic exercise, however useful that in itself might be. His examination of the War Powers Resolution (or Act, as it is commonly known) leads to his suggestions for overhauling it so that, prodded by the judiciary if need be, Congress could not wriggle or slither out of its responsibility.

It may sound forbidding if I say that this brief book is composed of 138 pages of text and 100 of notes. But I hasten to add that the notes contain some of Ely's pithiest comments, some of the most serious and simultaneously amusing quotations, and even a bit of Doonesbury. This is scholarship with a difference. It is not to be expected that Ely will have swept the field clear of all opposition, but now that this book exists, no one should engage in discussions about war and U.S. responsibility or the War Powers Act without having consulted it. □

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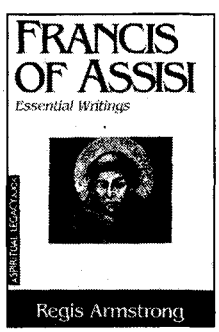

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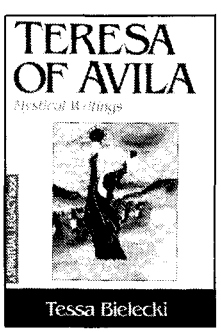

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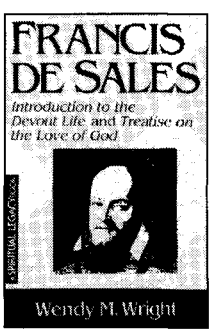

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KEEPING THE COLD WAR ON ICE

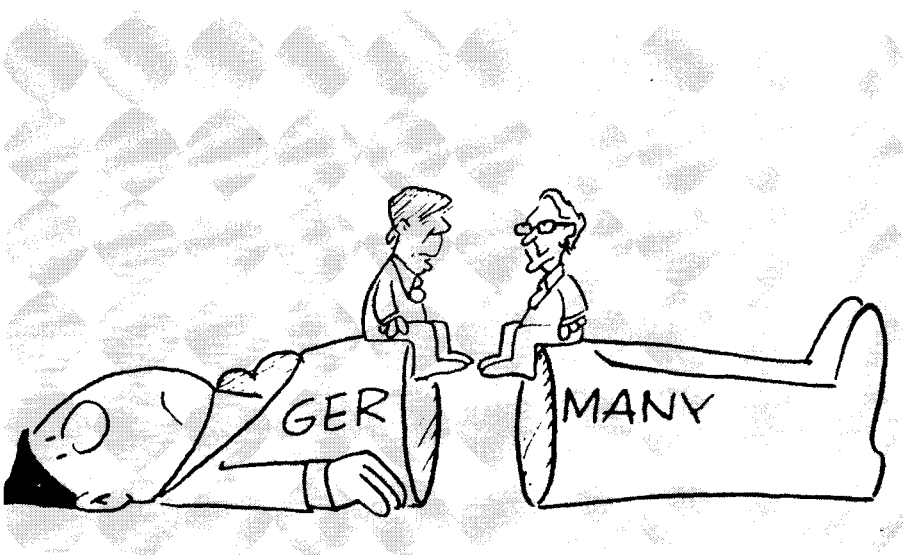
IN EUROPE'S NAME
Germany and the Divided Continent
Timothy Garton Ash
Random House, $27.50, 611 pp.

Timothy A. Byrnes

Timothy Garton Ash is already well-established as one of the leading observers and interpreters of events in Central Europe. His books, particularly *The Magic Lantern* and *The Polish Revolution*, have offered readers compelling on-the-scene-reporting presented within an accessible but carefully framed historical context. *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent*, Ash's weighty and fascinating account of German *Ostpolitik* and German unification, will only strengthen his well-deserved reputation.

The book covers a tremendous amount of historical material and employs an appropriately complex analytical framework. But it remains at its heart a compelling human story of how a group of West German political leaders struggled through four decades of partition to solve "the German Question" in all its myriad permutations. In the end, Ash is sharply critical of many steps taken by West German leaders from Adenauer to Brandt to Kohl. But he never loses sight of the fact that these men were trying to make sense of their unique position as leaders of a divided nation at the center of a divided continent. Indeed, what stands out most clearly about *In Europe's Name* is Ash's rich depiction of this unique position and of the policies, flawed and otherwise, that it spawned.

Ash's central historical argument is that *Ostpolitik*, West Germany's policy toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, was always fundamentally driven by the German version of the German question: how to ameliorate, and in time eliminate, the division of the German people into two states? Bonn's dealings with Moscow, East Berlin, Warsaw, and to some extent, Washington were based, in other words, on West Germany's desire to retain ties with Germans in "the Eastern Zone," ties that could serve as the foundation for future unification. West Germany, in this connection, worked through *Ostpolitik* to bridge the division of Europe because West German leaders believed that only the end of that broader division could allow for the end of the violent, unacceptable division of their own people and state.



Ash formulates and supports this argument through the use of an impressive array of sources. He has apparently surveyed all the documents that are currently available—in Bonn, Berlin, and Moscow—and he has interviewed virtually everyone who played an important role in *Ostpolitik* over the last three decades. Scholars writing on modern German history and the background to German unification will have to take his account very seriously. In fact, depending on the nature of documents not yet available, his account may already be authoritative.

However, for the general reader what is most interesting about *In Europe's Name* is not its historical depth, but rather the challenges Ash poses to the fundamental premises of *Ostpolitik*. He argues that West German policy toward East Germany and the Communist bloc in general was based on a belief in "liberalization through stabilization." West German leaders, in short, made the mistake of believing that East Germany and other Warsaw Pact countries would liberalize their internal policies if they were convinced the survival of their regimes was not at stake. The West, according to this formulation, should have accepted that Communist parties would rule Eastern Europe for the indefinite future and, just as importantly, clearly communicated that acceptance to Communist rulers.

The problem with this approach is that it gave insufficient credence to the inherent weaknesses of those Communist rulers and to the power and moral validity of internal dissent to them. This "liberalization through stabilization" led to Willy Brandt hushing the crowds who had gathered to hail his first visit to East Germany, to the West German foreign minister refusing to meet with Solidarity leaders during a trip to Warsaw in 1981, and to a gnawing dissatisfaction on the part of leading dissidents like Vaclav Havel with Bonn's willingness to throw its weight directly behind stability rather than liberation. Ash may have drawn this distinction a bit too sharply, and he, of course, has the luxury of

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hindsight. Nevertheless, he makes a persuasive case that "stabilization" led not to "liberalization," but rather to a kind of arrogant smugness on the part of Communist leaders. That this arrogance, and the repression it spawned, led in time to greater dissent and finally to revolution is not, for Ash, sufficient justification for West German policy. He grants that Willy Brandt and others were grabbing at those straws available in the '60s and '70s. But he is much harder on those, mostly Social Democrats, who continued to push stabilization of Eastern European regimes even into the late 1980s. By then, Ash argues, their approach may have been as immoral as it was ineffective.

It is especially interesting, I think, for Americans to find here what amounts to an account of the cold war from a perspective other than the very familiar U.S.-Soviet one. The cold war was many things, of course, but for Ash in this book it was the division of a continent that required a division of a country that, most tragically, resulted in the division of a city. *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* deepens our understanding of these central historical events of the late twentieth century while at the same time offering us timeless insights into the nature of human aspirations for both national identity and freedom from tyranny. That is plenty for one book. □

THE ROOTS OF RESPECT

ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley, editors
Basic Books, $25, 262 pp.

David Hollenbach

In the run-up to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna under United Nations auspices, some governments argued that cultural and religious differences among peoples undercut the universality claimed for human rights. This was a politically convenient argument, for these governments had their own reasons for wanting the world to keep its nose out of their authoritarian internal affairs. The Vienna Conference rejected this defense of "difference," but doing so cost much energy that could have been devoted to a more positive agenda.

The seven contributions to this intellectually challenging book were originally presented as the 1993 Amnesty Lectures in Oxford. They reveal the ambiguous relationship that exists between some of the most important currents of moral theory running through the academy today and the active struggle to secure human rights on the front lines where Amnesty International works.

The central issue is skepticism about transcultural moral norms versus the assertion that there really are universal human rights. There is no agreement in this book on the intellectual basis of human rights. In fact there is something like a consensus on the futility of any search for indubitable "foundations." But the essays do provide a vivid picture of some of the main trends in current moral theory and of their "cash value" in practice.

John Rawls makes a valiant case for the universalist side of the argument. Since his 1971 *Theory of Justice*, Rawls appeared to move from a universalist idea of justice to a more modest effort to systematize the political-moral ideas latent within the democratic traditions of the West. This led some critics to suggest that he ended up with a historicist understanding of justice applicable only to the Western tribe that is heir to these traditions. Here Rawls sets out to lay these suspicions to rest. With his typical precision, he argues that, beginning from Western liberal democratic presuppositions, it is possible to construct an international law of peoples that will be seen as reasonable

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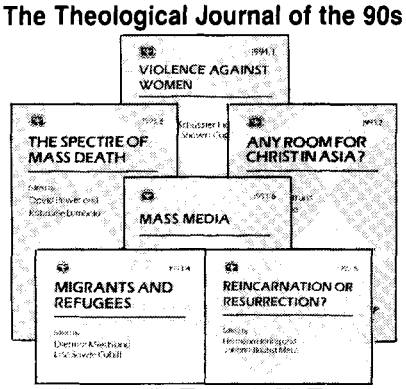

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not only by other democracies but also by what he calls "well ordered" hierarchical regimes. Rawls clearly has Islamic societies in mind here, though he does not say so.

To be "well ordered" these regimes must meet certain conditions. Principally, they must be rational—i.e., on "due reflection" they recognize that their own interests are served by international standards that reject the use of force and that they can reasonably advance their conception of the good life only through non-expansionist, peaceful means such as diplomacy, trade, and persuasion. Internally, they can see that, even though they are not liberal, they must be "reasonable consultation hierarchies." This means that associations of people can make their voices heard, that the government must listen to their dissent and give at least a conscientious reply, and that people are not persecuted for their beliefs even if they do not enjoy liberal Western liberties. When a government deliberately fails to respect such rights, it becomes an outlaw regime and international sanctions or perhaps even military intervention may be appropriate.

Richard Rorty has much less hope for the power of reasonableness to reach these conclusions. He rejects strong claims for the power of reason inherited from the likes of Plato and Kant. But he is also pretty pessimistic about the more pragmatic reasonableness of Rawls's recent theorizing. For Rorty, growth in human solidarity is a matter not of knowledge but of sentiment—our ability to feel for each other. "Sentimental education" has the goal of breaking through false solidarities like those that lead Serbs to regard Bosnian Muslims as only quasi-human. It is not knowledge of the dignity of the Muslims or of the fact that they share a common human nature that will lead Serbs to stop raping Muslim women. It is the capacity to feel that "they" are "like us." So expansion of the "human rights culture" that has grown in the West is not a matter of convincing people to hold new ideas. Ideas, in fact, are the problem. People often kill each other in their name. Rorty's alternative is to find ways of manipulating sentiments to produce a greater number of "nice," people around the world. And to become "nice" they need to relax in security, the way we in the rich democracies do—to enjoy the novels and plays that help us feel sympathy for the poor people who don't enjoy bourgeois comforts. Rorty writes that this shows that Christ was right in saying that love is more important than knowledge. But somehow "niceness" doesn't sound to me quite like what Jesus of Nazareth had in mind.

Catharine MacKinnon also rejects universal rational standards as a basis for human rights. She begins from the concrete horrors inflicted upon women in the Balkan slaughter and generalizes to the abuse heaped upon women by men throughout history. The whole ethos of human rights generated in the aftermath

"...and then suddenly the sun breaks through and their human rights record doesn't seem so bad at all."

of the Holocaust was an ethos for men and how they should treat men. Only by restructuring the concrete basis of this ethos in the particular experience of violated women can the true issue be confronted—Who has power? MacKinnon deconstructs the alleged universality of human rights and wants to construct an ethic of the rights of women as the only adequate response to the concrete particularity of the experience of women now and in the past. Universal, formal standards of equal rights are entirely inadequate. Only a socially and historically contextualized approach to equality has a chance of making a difference for those denied power.

Jean François Lyotard comes closest, in my view, to the real issue. The most important commonality among human beings resides in their capacity for "interlocution," their ability to speak and listen to each other. It is precisely in talking together that both the solidarity that binds us together and our deep differences from each other are discovered. And speech is only really significant when another person says something I do not already know. In fact, freedom of speech takes on moral weight only when the Other announces to me something I do not even understand. Otherness or difference among people is the occasion of the discovery that we are all at least potential members of a universal community. Achieving civility, therefore, demands that we free ourselves of all the forces within us that prevent the recognition of others as originating sources of "annunciation."

Lyotard loses nerve, however, when he identifies this "otherness" with irremediable "strangeness" that remains forever opaque. He is undoubtedly right that human beings remain inexhaustibly different to each other. And it is certainly true that language, ideas, and "reason" cannot capture the reality of even one other person with whom one is intimate, let alone the reality of men and women who live whole civilizations away. But we do have a vocabulary that acknowledges this inexpressibility. It is the language we speak when we utter a proper name, not simply as a descriptive token but as a form of direct address. When we speak to another and respond to another's words to us, difference and solidarity merge. Lyotard thinks that postmodern societies suffer from a foreclosure of this kind of relation with the Other. That may well be. But he has said more about how it might be rediscovered than his somber pessimism might suggest. And what he says hints, despite himself, at a way that a multicultural world might learn about human rights from Jesus' sayings about the primacy of love that goes beyond anything dreamed of in Rorty's philosophy of niceness, Rawls's reasonable pursuit of interests, or MacKinnon's dismantling of the façades of male power. □

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

ops reportedly sought to squelch the project; further, that the United States Catholic Conference "ceased sponsorship of the study" following receipt of an interim report from the authors—a situation, one of them told McClory, that "left him and fellow researchers high and dry." I mistakenly concluded that "high and dry" meant a funding cutoff rather than cessation of sponsorship. Recent phone conversations with both authors confirm that the Lilly Endowment's funding was uninterrupted. As one whose current research is sponsored by the Endowment, I can testify to their steadfast support. An apology is owed and hereby given.

PATRICK McNAMARA

Judge not

An Eastern City

To the Editors: Out of my own experience I would ask anyone who might respond negatively to the article by "Madelein Gray" ["Giving up the Gift," February 25] to leave judgment to God, who is alone able to read hearts.

During the first twenty years of marriage I had eight children interspersed with four spontaneous miscarriages. At least four of my living children and all four of those lost by miscarriage were conceived during what should have been "safe" periods. With much prayer and abstinence we were able to follow the rhythm system for the next twelve years. Then came a menopausal pregnancy (of which I was totally unaware) that ended in spontaneous miscarriage.

I was healthy, and now that I have the children I wouldn't want fewer. But, given "Madelein Gray's" illness, I can understand her frustration, as well as her concern for her husband and the healthy children she had.

To "Madelein Gray": I see the writing of this essay as a painful exercise in therapy and a plea for help to surmount the final hurdle. I read it through a wellspring of tears. I pray that God will grant you the opportunity and the grace and courage needed for sacramental reconciliation and the peace it would bring.

NAME WITHHELD

Stop my subscription

Danbury, Conn.

To the Editors: I give up. I thought I could hang in, but no longer. The recent slide into mean-spirited editorials is sad to see from a once-favorite magazine. And the attacks on readers who respond to such stuff, with the editors having to have the last condescending word, are at best unprofessional. Please cancel my subscription and refund any unused portion.

ROBERT J. DUBRUL

Keep it coming

Leesburg, Fla.

To the Editors: I didn't want to renew, but you are so persistent, and—more to the point—I do so enjoy your magazine. In my opinion it is the best Catholic magazine on the market. No sugar or saccharine but plenty of meat. Sometimes I have to read an article twice but it's worth the effort. So here's my check.

CLARE R. JOHNSON

Gays & Christ

A Western City

To the Editors: Reading their articles on homosexuality in the issue of January 28, I concluded that James Nash, Luke Timothy Johnson, Dennis O'Brien, James Kales, and Paul Baumann are good and decent men trying to reach common ground for a discussion of modern homosexuality and the modern church. What they find hard to grasp, I imagine, is the feeling of abandonment and resulting anger among gay people who were raised Christian, who hear the ravings of TV evangelists, and who wait for a response from their church, a response that never comes.

I happened to hear the National Public Radio program on which Mr. Nash appeared and was embarrassed by the producers' choice of two radicals to pair with him. Are there not plenty of gay academics who could and would have entered

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into the kind of rational dialogue he wanted?

But I am not merely embarrassed when a TV preacher like Pat Robertson calls for the cleansing of America and recalls God's order to the Israelites to kill all their enemies, and then his sidekick suggests that maybe that's what we need in America. Hearing that, I get scared. Surely there are Christians who don't think a bloodbath is called for. In response our church proclaims that the human rights of gay people must be protected but seems less than enthusiastic in affirming these rights.

Believing you are gay and believing in Christ is not easy; it's a constant source of pain. Once at a festive Thanksgiving dinner a friend remarked, "I think all the faggots should be lined up and shot!" I said nothing, but the evening was destroyed for me. On the other side of the coin, there's a song—I don't know its name and don't want to—that contains a line condemning Christ in very crude language. When that song is played in a gay bar, often many of those present cheer! The rest of us hurt at this, but we say nothing; we understand the anger.

Wanting to serve the church, I once studied for the priesthood. Instead I married, enjoyed more than twenty years of near harmony (strained by self-doubts) and raised two wonderful children. My honesty, and my love for my wife, finally drove me to tell her of my latent feelings. Years of counseling followed; reconciliation did not, for I could not live a double life. We chose to separate (but remain good friends; she has reviewed this note and encouraged me to send it). I was told that my marriage could certainly be annulled, confirming my own sense that I have always been gay. Yet the same church that would grant an annulment pictures a God who has endowed me with a sex drive along with an orientation that required me to practice lifelong celibacy. Sounds cruel to me.

Some of your writers ask homosexuals to bear witness. Where, in church? and be asked not to come back? Go to any AIDS ward and you will find wonderful witness. Some victims go to their death still screaming for help. Others find peace, but that is not made easier by the vicious use of biblical texts uttered with no scrap of compassion, or by the silence of those with authority to reply in Christ's name.

A good priest once told me I just had to trust God. When I get punched with the finality of death, I guess I will have the answers. I hope so, and hope my trust will prove rewarding. Until then, I will worry and do my best.

A final reality. I'm asking you not to print my name with this letter. My employer is a daily communicant and a genuinely good man, but if he learned the real reason why my wife and I separated, I would be fired on the spot.

NAME WITHHELD

An author replies:

Two comments on this letter:

Years ago, Paddy Chayefsky wrote a play titled "The Latent Heterosexual." Zero Mostel played a homosexual who discovered this repressed tendency. By his own story your correspondent would appear to be sexually attracted to both men and women. How does one decide which trait is "latent"? I continue to believe on psychological and philosophical grounds that a categorical description, "I am a homosexual (heterosexual)" is mistaken. Psychologically I stick with Freud's "polymorphous" sexuality which suggests that there are latent homo/heterosexual traits in every psyche. Philosophically, humans are not homo/heterosexual in the way a stone is stone. One may *decide* on good grounds (inclination, vocation, circumstance) to declare a sexual life. Only in that sense can I see saying "I am homo/heterosexual."

The writer is concerned about the opprobrium and contempt heaped on homosexuals—often by his own church. I am in sympathy with his complaint. It is not at all clear why the church is so heavily invested in certain issues of sexual morality. Sexual practices get rather minor notice in the Bible compared to virtues like justice and mercy, which seem to be rather evenly divided between homosexuals and heterosexuals.

The problem really lies in humanity's inability (for good reason) to know quite what to do with sex. Sex is the source of comedy and farce—but also of tragic obsession. We can't seem to make up our minds whether we should laugh at the fools we make of ourselves in sexual heat or weep at the dissolution of self that passion can accomplish. Sexual orientation is at the same time too trivial and too profound an issue to be dealt with in the manner of our current public debates.

DENNIS O'BRIEN

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What's New Orleans?

PEGGY ELLSBERG

As I waited with my six-year-old son in stalled traffic on the West Side Highway, at the end of a long day, we were both feeling haggard and hungry. My son was yearning for a chocolate Easter egg. "The one you gave me when we were at Caroline's, with white inside, and then yellow inside that. I wish I had one now."

I was amazed that Nicholas could remember that Easter at Caroline's; he had been less than two. And why couldn't I remember buying that egg? There had been a time when I was seventeen or eighteen when I recorded every single thing I did in a diary. Nothing in my life, I resolved, would be lost.

Of course, things are different now. My adult life is crammed with errands and appointments and lists. I collapse into bed each night, so tired that I cannot stay awake long enough to review my day. And just as I fall with a thud into deep sleep, I am invariably haunted by the sense that I'm forgetting something.

"I wish I had some of the gumbo we tried last year in New Orleans," I replied as we inched along in traffic.

"What's New Orleans?" Nicholas asked.

Since he was born we have always taken Nicholas everywhere with us. He likes to strap himself into an airplane seat and study the map in the flight magazine. We have hoped that by exposing him to our modest travels we will widen his horizons, fill his world with vivid impressions of exotic landscapes and distinctive cities. Flannery O'Connor said something to the effect that all you needed to be a writer was to have been a child. So Nicholas would have a head start by being a child with fabulous memories.

"What's New Orleans!" I cried in shock. I told him it was incredible to me that he could forget the outlandish costumes, the bands playing Dixieland music in the streets, the steamboats on the Mississippi River. Nicholas's face looked blank. He could recall perfectly a chocolate he had eaten when he was nineteen months old, but he had completely missed three days of unforgettable pageantry just last year. I was especially surprised by this gap because Nicholas usually has an excellent memory. In middle age, mine is starting to slip: I cannot tell you one single thing that happened to me between the ages of twenty-six and twenty-nine, for example. But Nicholas has so few years to keep track of.

"Was Daddy in New Orleans, too?" my son asked, eager to crack this mystery. "Yes," I said. "Remember when he took you to McDonalds and you got a peacock feather?"

"McDonalds!" said Nicholas with relief. "Now I remember! New Orleans! It's right next to Yonkers!"

We were right next to Yonkers ourselves by now, and my son, exhausted by this Herculean strain on his memory, fell asleep. Traffic was finally sailing along, and I began to consider that when Grandpa, in his nineties, lay on his deathbed, he suddenly began to remember things. Once he had told me that he could recall nothing before his sixteenth birthday. And that was no surprise. Grandpa's mother had died when he was a baby, and his childhood had been filled with long hours of hard work on a midwestern farm, unrelieved by maternal affection. Certainly no one had ever taken him to see Mardi Gras or the changing of the guard. Who wouldn't forget a childhood like that?

But now in his final days, a curtain seemed to open onto a floodlit stage busy with early drama—a button missing on a sailor suit, the smell of frying chicken at a church supper, snow so deep it covered the kitchen windows, a goldfish. "And I remember my mother," whispered Grandpa on the evening of his death. "You can't possibly remember her!" we claimed, "she died when you were only fourteen months old!" "But I do remember her. She was painting pictures on a lampshade. Her dress had a big white bow in the back...."

And so as I drove Nicholas home toward his dinner that night, I thought that perhaps the solitudes and silences of infancy and of old age have something in common. I turned on the car radio, hunting for some evening news. Instead, I heard a woman with a Texas accent singing "Where are you going, my little one, little one," a song that has always made me weepy. "Turn around and you're two, turn around and you're four," she sang sadly. I pulled into my driveway, and parked under the lilac bushes, thick and heavy with their perennial purple fragrance.

I looked over at my sleeping son, his fair shining head filled with a sweet disorder of super-soakers and Happy Meals and long summer evenings, all of it swirling in the half-understood dream of early childhood. I was still in the driver's seat, the engine off, the radio on. "Turn around and you're tiny; turn around and you're grown," the song continued. And I looked at my child, suddenly half-grown, and I could have sworn that it was just a few weeks ago, certainly no farther back than Christmas, that he was a brand new baby in an infant safety seat, his eyes and his tiny fists closed around the inscrutable slumber of not yet knowing things. And I tell you that I could not for my life comprehend how whole years had vanished in the space of mere weeks. And I turned around. For that brief moment, he was still six years old. And already he was starting to forget things.

When my husband came out on the porch to investigate why we were still sitting in the car, he found me clutching the steering wheel, choked up over that silly song. I was taking in the lilacs, trying to memorize them, trying to hold on tight to something I knew would have to be lost. □

Peggy Ellsberg teaches at Barnard College.

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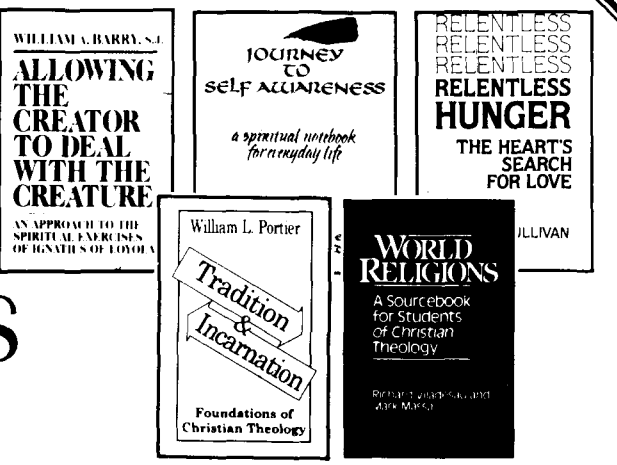

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